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# WORLD CUP REVIEW



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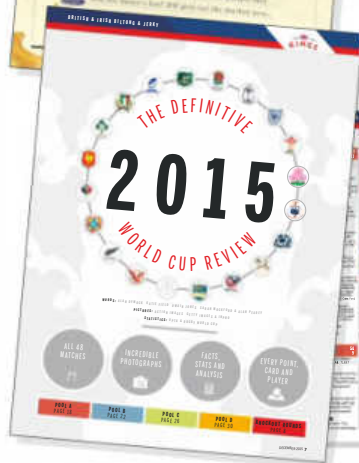
**MATCH-BY-MATCH RUNDOWN**  
Facts and stats from all 48 matches

61

**HOW THE WORLD CUP WAS WON**  
Stuart Barnes analyses the world champions

77

**HOME NATIONS REPORT CARD**  
The verdict on England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales



## HEADLINE MAKERS



**68** Nehe Milner-Skudder



**70** Mario Ledesma



**71** Anthony Watson



**72** John Hardie



**86** Iain Henderson



**87** Agustín Ormaechea



**88** Ayumu Goromaru



**90** Gareth Davies



**91** Lood de Jager



**92** Vasil Lobzhanidze

## PLUS INSIDE

- 44 Ma'a Nonu
- 46 Matt Evans
- 49 Agustín Pichot
- 52 The Secret Player
- 55 Jonathan Kaplan
- 82 French rugby
- 94 League converts
- 99 Club Focus
- 120 Leone Nakarawa's tips
- 128 Johnny Redelinghuys
- 130 Tour Tale





## A happy, noisy melting pot



I KNEW the World Cup had left an indelible mark when my eight-year-old son gave me an impromptu haka.

It was that type of tournament, with the power of rugby transcending its usual environs.

From the first weekend, when Japan pulled off the biggest shock in RWC history by beating the Springboks, to Dan Carter bisecting the Twickenham uprights with a sublime drop-goal late on in the final, rugby fans and converts were utterly spoiled.

The serious gains made by Tier Two nations made it the most competitive tournament ever and England's fans partied on after their team's exit, making it the best-attended World Cup. Infused with nearly half-a-million fans from abroad, it was a happy, noisy, cultural melting pot, as the party atmosphere rebounded like a pinball from the west at Sandy Park and Kingsholm, up north at St James' Park and Elland Road and down south at Brighton Community Stadium.

The end of a World Cup is a time for contemplation as we bid farewell to some greats of the game. The 2016 Test arena will be poorer without Carter, Richie McCaw, Jean de Villiers, Victor Matfield, Freddie Michalak and Juan Martín Fernández Lobbe.

So now we look forward to Japan 2019 and wonder whether anyone can catch the All Blacks. Farewell England 2015, it's been a blast...

*Owain Jones*

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## DON'T MISS THIS MONTH



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Smile and wave Fans from the USA and South Africa get into the World Cup mood





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## THIS MONTH'S WINNERS AND LOSERS



### ▲ WINNER SONNY BILL WILLIAMS

In an act of huge generosity, All Black Williams gave his World Cup winner's medal to a 14-year-old boy after he'd been "smoked" to the ground by a security guard. World Rugby later presented SBW with another medal.



### ▲ LOSER PREMIERSHIP RUGBY

Their salary cap investigation has been handled poorly. To release a statement saying they had entered into a "confidential agreement" with clubs undermined a league built on fair play and transparency.



### ▲ WINNER THE GAP IS CLOSING

Remember NZ beating Japan 145-17? Those days are over. At RWC 2015 the average gap in scores between Tier One and Tier Two was 30pts, compared with 36 in 2011. More funds will continue the trend.



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PICTURES: ACTION IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES & INPHO

STATISTICS: OPTA & RUGBY WORLD CUP

ALL 48  
MATCHES

H

INCREDIBLE  
PHOTOGRAPHS



FACTS,  
STATS AND  
ANALYSIS



EVERY POINT,  
CARD AND  
PLAYER



**POOL A**  
PAGE 18

**POOL B**  
PAGE 22

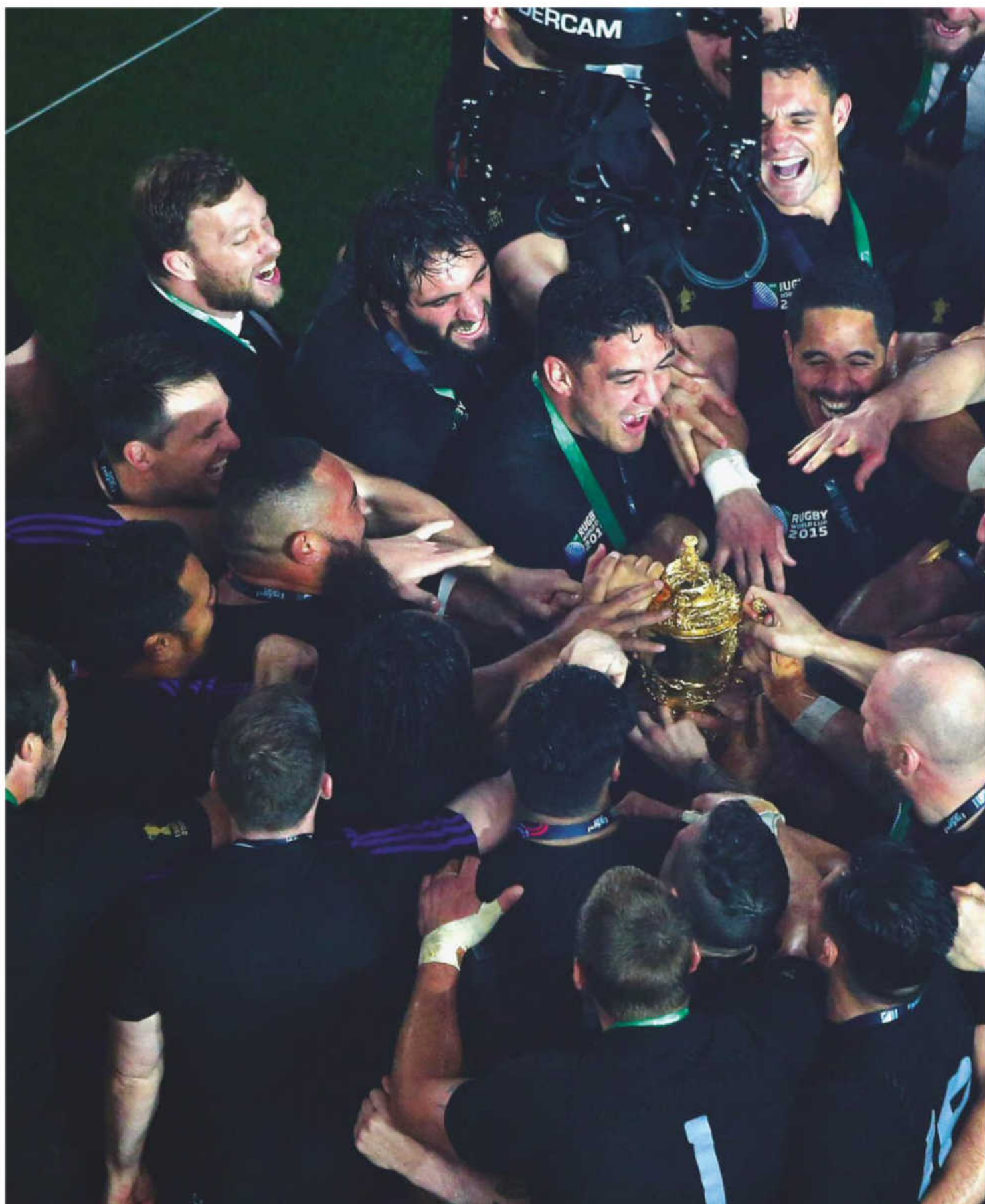
**POOL C**  
PAGE 26

**POOL D**  
PAGE 30

**KNOCKOUT ROUNDS**  
PAGE 8



## THE FINAL







**The cup's still ours!**  
New Zealand celebrate and  
(right) a dejected Stephen Moore



**Slide show**  
Milner-Skudder  
gets the first try

**NEW ZEALAND 34**  
**AUSTRALIA 17**

Saturday 31 October, 4pm  
Twickenham Att: 80,125

### IN THIS MATCH

With a record 14th consecutive RWC win, the All Blacks became the first team to retain the World Cup and the first to lift it three times. A super match saw the most tries (five) and points (51) in a final and brought New Zealand's first crown on foreign soil. Richie McCaw, the first man to lead a side to two titles, equalled Jason Leonard's record of 22 RWC appearances while Dan Carter's 19 points are a record for an All Black in a World Cup final.

Tries by Nehe Milner-Skudder and Ma'a Nonu helped the All Blacks to a 21-3 lead on 42 minutes, Australia hit back with 14 points while Ben Smith was in the sin-bin for a tip tackle (the first card in a final), then New Zealand closed things out.

### TURNING POINT

Hindered by early injuries to Kane Douglas and Matt Giteau, Australia fought back to within four points with ten minutes to go. Then from a ruck, the ball was fired back to Dan Carter, who, with a millisecond to set himself, struck a drop-goal from 45 metres to give the All Blacks a seven-point lead – only his eighth drop in 112 Tests. New Zealand never looked back.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

NZ captain Richie McCaw: "No one person is bigger than the team. Your job is to enhance the All Black legacy. It's not about being a hero, it's about

serving the team. In the end, it was just satisfaction to get the job done. The pieces of the puzzle came together."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Michael Cheika: "We didn't come to England to make the final; we came here to win it. One person had to start believing we could do it and the belief grew from there. We've made big gains in the last 12 months and we have a lot of heart and courage to move forward from here. This is just the start. We want to do really good things for Australian rugby."



**Centre points**  
Kuridrani scores

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; N Milner-Skudder (B Barrett 65), C Smith (SB Williams ht), M Nonu, J Savea; D Carter, A Smith (T Kerr-Barlow 71); J Moody (B Franks 58), D Coles (K Mealamu 65), O Franks (C Faumuina 54), B Retallick, S Whitelock, J Kaino (V Vito 71), R McCaw (capt, S Cane 80), K Read.  
**Tries (3):** Milner-Skudder, Nonu, Barrett.  
**Cons:** Carter 2. **Pens:** Carter 4. **DG:** Carter.  
**Yellow card:** B Smith (51)

**AUSTRALIA** I Folau; A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau (K Beale 26), D Mitchell (M Toomua 65-71); B Foley, W Genia (N Phipps 70); S Sio (J Slipper 58), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 55), S Kepu (G Holmes 58), K Douglas (D Mumm 15), R Simmons, S Fardy (B McCalman 60), M Hooper, D Pocock.  
**Tries (2):** Pocock, Kuridrani.  
**Cons:** Foley 2. **Pen:** Foley.  
**REFEREE** Nigel Owens (Wales)  
**MAN OF THE MATCH** Dan Carter





## BRONZE FINAL



**Lock's stock**  
Eben Etzebeth dots down

**SOUTH AFRICA** 24  
**ARGENTINA** 13

Friday 30 October, 8pm  
Olympic Stadium Att: 55,925

## IN THIS MATCH

Victor Matfield led South Africa to a third-place finish in his final Test, retiring as the sixth-most capped player in history (127 caps). JP Pietersen gave the Boks an early lead they never relinquished and, despite Juan Pablo Orlandi's late try, the Pumas got little reward for their attacking endeavour. In a couple of subplots, Nicolás Sánchez won the Golden Boot, his eight points making him top scorer at RWC 2015 with 97; while, despite several chances, Bryan Habana couldn't score the try that would have taken him clear of Jonah Lomu as outright top try-scorer in RWC history.

## TURNING POINT

South Africa's decision to kick for goal in the 13th minute showed they were taking this game seriously. With Handre Pollard chasing the Golden Boot, they closed out the win by opting for more kickable points – decisions met with boos by the crowd.



**Nowhere to go**  
Nicolás Sánchez is wrapped up

**VITAL STATISTIC**

**14**

The number of turnovers won by the Springboks, compared to four by Argentina

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Wing Bryan Habana (right): "Unfortunately I didn't play my greatest game ever wearing a Springbok jersey so it might be one I want to forget. I'm really proud of the last 12 years, the highs and the lows, it has been an unbelievable journey. I'm not too sure it's the end yet."



## AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Daniel Hourcade: "We're very happy with the results in the tournament. The long-term goal is 2019. We wanted to leave everything ready for the future and being in the top four is great. We went for an attacking game. I hope this is seen as opening the door and it needs to carry on."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux (P Lambie 64); JP Pietersen, J Kriel, D De Allende, B Habana (J Serfontein 67); H Pollard, R Pienaar (R Paige 77); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane ht), B du Plessis (A Strauss 48), F Malherbe (J du Plessis 61-69), E Etzebeth, V Matfield (capt, L de Jager 63), F Louw (S Burger 61-66), S Burger (W Alberts 53), D Vermeulen. **Tries** (2): Pietersen, Etzebeth. **Con:** Pollard. **Pens:** Pollard 4.

**ARGENTINA** L Amorosino; S Cordero, M Moroni, J de la Fuente (S González Iglesias 71), H Agulla (JP Socino 58); N Sánchez (capt), T Cubelli (M Landajo 53); J Figallo (L Noguera Paz 15-22, 61-64, 71), J Montoya (S García Botta 77), R Herrera (JP Orlandi 55), M Alemanno (G Petti 47), T Lavanini, J Ortega Desio, JM Fernández Lobbe (F Isa 53), JM Leguizamón.

**Try:** Orlandi. **Con:** Sánchez.

**Pen:** Sánchez. **DG:** Sánchez.

**Yellow card:** Cubelli (5)

**REFEREE** John Lacey (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH**

Damian De Allende



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## SEMI-FINALS

**SOUTH AFRICA** 18  
**NEW ZEALAND** 20

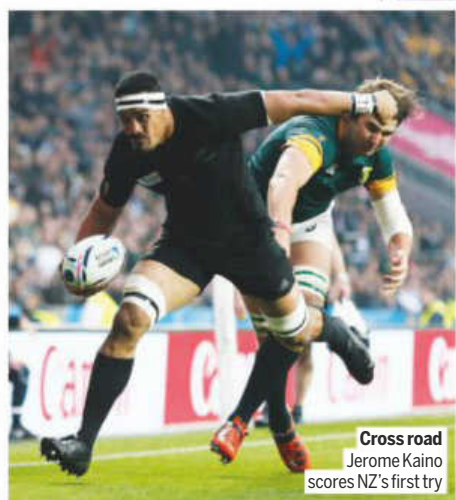
Saturday 24 October, 4pm  
Twickenham Att: 80,090

## IN THIS MATCH

New Zealand overcame a half-time deficit to win a tight affair in the rain – the first time they have triumphed in a RWC knockout match having trailed at the break. They also set a new record by winning 13 World Cup matches in a row, while Richie McCaw became the first man to captain his side for a 12th time in a RWC game and Dan Carter overtook Grant Fox to become New Zealand's top RWC point-scorer with 172.

## TURNING POINT

Around the 50-minute mark, South Africa tried to clear from their own 22, but Schalk Burger was stripped of the ball by Dan Carter – not a clip he'll enjoy watching! –



**Cross road**  
Jerome Kaino  
scores NZ's first try

and from the ensuing attack Beauden Barrett dived over in the corner to give New Zealand a lead they never gave up.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Sonny Bill Williams (below consoling Jesse Kriel): "It could have gone either way. We could have been the ones sitting on the grass knowing four years of work is over. There is a massive rivalry between the teams but also massive respect."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Captain Fourie du Preez: "It's a bit emotional and hard to take.

One lineout, one penalty, one conversion – that's all the difference was. It was so close and the margins are so small, so there is a lot of disappointment. We



**Tight tussle**  
Brodie Retallick fends  
off Handre Pollard

had an opportunity and we didn't take it. But I am immensely proud of everybody for the way we pulled ourselves together (after losing to Japan). After that everybody stood up."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux; JP Pietersen, J Kriel, D De Allende (J Serfontein 80), B Habana; H Pollard (P Lambie 65), F du Preez (capt); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 53), B du Plessis (A Strauss 53), F Malherbe

## VITAL STATISTIC

**20**

The number of tackles missed by South Africa compared to just three by New Zealand

(J du Plessis 60), E Etzebeth, L de Jager (V Matfield 60), F Louw (W Alberts 29-35), S Burger (W Alberts 64), D Vermeulen.

**Pens:** Pollard 5, Lambie.

**Yellow card:** Habana (52)

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; N Milner-Skudder (B Barrett 49), C Smith, M Nonu (SB Williams 52), J Savea; D Carter, A Smith; J Moody (B Franks 69), D Coles (K Mealamu 67), O Franks (C Faumuina 52), B Retallick, S Whitelock, J Kaino (S Cane 67), R McCaw (capt), K Read.

**Tries (2):** Kaino, Barrett. **Cons:** Carter 2.

**Pen:** Carter. **DG:** Carter.

**Yellow card:** Kaino (39)

**REFEREE** Jérôme Garcès (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Ben Smith





**Quick off the mark**  
Rob Simmons scores

**ARGENTINA**  
**AUSTRALIA**

**15**  
**29**

Sunday 25 October, 4pm  
Twickenham Att: 80,025

### IN THIS MATCH

Rob Simmons's 68-second interception – the fastest try of RWC 2015 – set the tone for a helter-skelter second semi-final. Adam Ashley-Cooper added three tries, so becoming the first Wallaby to score two RWC hat-tricks, and Australia eased through to a record-equalling fourth World

**VITAL**  
**STATISTIC**

**81**

Percentage of territory and possession the Pumas had in the last ten minutes

Cup final. Argentina, who had scored 26 tries in their previous five games, couldn't break through the Australian defence despite running 577 metres and making 18 clean breaks. Michael Hooper, aged 23 years and 361 days, became the second-youngest player to win 50 Test caps, after George North, and Wayne Barnes refereed a record 15th RWC game.

### TURNING POINT

Tomás Lavanini was harshly sin-binned for a 'dangerous' tackle on Israel Folau with Australia leading 14-6. While he was gone, Adam Ashley-Cooper went over for his second try and the Pumas couldn't recover from being 13 points down.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Sekope Kepu: "We had to keep getting up off the ground and defending our hearts out. That's something we pride ourselves on. That's the heart and soul of the team."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Juan Martín Fernández Lobbe: "We had a dream to play next Saturday, not Friday, but we got in front of a really good team. I'm really amazed at how they defended. We threw everything we had; organised, not organised and everything we had we put it on the pitch, but we couldn't score and that was the difference."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ARGENTINA** I Tuculet; S Cordero, M Bosch, JM Hernández (J de la Fuente 43), J Imhoff (L Amorosino 17); N Sánchez, M Landajo (T Cubelli 55); M Ayerza (L Noguera Paz 60), A Creevy (capt, JS Montoya 30), R Herrera (J Figallo 60), G Petti (M Alemanno 57), T Lavanini, P Matera, JM Fernández Lobbe, L Senatore (F Isa 48).

**Pens:** Sanchez 5.

**Yellow card:** Lavanini (25)

**AUSTRALIA** I Folau (M Toomua 64); A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau (K Beale 46), D Mitchell; B Foley, W Genia (N Phipps 66); J Slipper (T Smith 52), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 58), S Kepu (G Holmes 52), K Douglas, R Simmons (D Mumm 66), S Fardy (B McCalman 55-60, 70), M Hooper, D Pocock.

**Tries (4):** Simmons, Ashley-Cooper 3.

**Cons:** Foley 3. **Pen:** Foley.

**REFEREE** Wayne Barnes (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Adam Ashley-Cooper



**Puma pain**  
Julian Montoya



**First up** Adam Ashley-Cooper gets the first of his three tries



## QUARTER-FINALS



**Royal rumble**  
The forwards tussle

**SOUTH AFRICA** 23  
**WALES** 19

Saturday 17 October, 4pm  
Twickenham Att: 79,572

### IN THIS MATCH

The first of a stunning set of quarter-finals saw Dan Biggar kick 14 points and create a try for Gareth Davies, who equalled David Kirk's RWC record of five for a scrum-half. But the Boks pipped Wales in a breathless clash, the ball being in play for a staggering 45 minutes. Under Warren Gatland, Wales have now lost 28 out of 30 Tests against the big three southern sides, 14 of them by a score. Schalk Burger set a Springbok record for RWC appearances with 18 while Alun Wyn Jones played his 100th Test.

### TURNING POINT

The Boks trailed for all but three minutes from half-time to the 74th minute. Then Duane Vermeulen broke blind from a scrum in Wales' 22 and his brilliant offload made the winning try for Fourie du Preez.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Heyneke Meyer: "Fourie was brilliant. I would like to kiss Fourie. I have always said that coaching is overrated. You have to pick players with character and who perform under pressure. If you put pressure on charcoal it turns to diamonds."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Captain Sam Warburton: "I feel we are going out (of the World Cup) too early. Games are won on individual moments and we made just one mistake at the end."



### VITAL STATISTIC

7

Number of RWC games played by Warburton, Lydiate and Faletau – a record for a back row

### The winner

Du Preez scores



### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux; JP Pietersen, J Kriel (J Serfontein 67), D De Allende, B Habana; H Pollard (P Lambie 76), F du Preez (capt); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 56), B du Plessis (A Strauss 12-23, 55), F Malherbe (J du Plessis 60), E Etzebeth (PS du Toit 68), L de Jager, F Louw (W Alberts 67), S Burger, D Vermeulen.  
**Try:** Du Preez. **Pens:** Pollard 5. **DG:** Pollard.  
**WALES** G Anscombe; A Cuthbert, T Morgan (J Hook 67), J Roberts, G North; D Biggar (R Priestland 73), G Davies (L Williams 70); G Jenkins (P James 55), S Baldwin (K Owens 56), S Lee (T Francis 55), L Charteris (B Davies 63), AW Jones, D Lydiate (J Tipuric 67), S Warburton (capt), T Faletau.  
**Try:** G Davies. **Con:** Biggar. **Pens:** Biggar 3. **DG:** Biggar.  
**REFEREE** Wayne Barnes (England)  
**MAN OF THE MATCH** Schalk Burger

◀ **Respected**  
Warburton leads his side away



## NEW ZEALAND 62 FRANCE 13

Saturday 17 October, 8pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 71,619

### IN THIS MATCH

Philippe Saint-André's troubled reign as France coach ended in humiliation as the records tumbled in Cardiff. The All Blacks' 62 points is the most by a team in a RWC knockout match and the most conceded



Throw it out  
Ma'a Nonu offloads

### VITAL STATISTIC

# 60

Points conceded  
by France in their  
previous five knockout  
matches combined

by France in a Test. In scoring nine tries, NZ also pushed their World Cup tally to 306 tries – Australia became the only other team to pass the 200 mark in RWCs the next day. France were just torn apart.

### TURNING POINT

France never recovered from a double blow after 11 minutes – a charge-down try by Brodie Retallick and match-ending injury to Freddie Michalak. They got within 11 points (24-13) after Louis Picamoles's try late in the half, but a minute later Julian Savea scored his second of three tries, skittling defenders on his way, and the second period became an All Black romp.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Julian Savea: "Everyone was on fire, the whole team. I was really proud of the



Up in the air  
Louis Picamoles and Ben Smith



Scream team  
Savea celebrates

boys. From the first whistle to the last it was really an outstanding performance."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Full-back Scott Spedding: "We've worked hard for four months to get here. There's not one guy who's taken any short cuts. We've put everything into this and for it to finish like this is massively disappointing. It will take a while to get over this."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; N Milner-Skudder (B Barrett ht), C Smith (SB Williams 52), M Nonu, J Savea; D Carter, A Smith (T Kerr-Barlow 65); W Crockett (J Moody 28), D Coles (K Mealamu 61), O Franks (C Faumuina 52), B Retallick, S Whitelock, J Kaino (V Vito 65), R McCaw (capt, S Cane 69), K Read.  
**Tries (9):** Retallick, Milner-Skudder, Savea 3, Kaino, Read, Kerr-Barlow 2. **Cons:** Carter 7.  
**Pen:** Carter.

**FRANCE** S Spedding; N Nakaitaci, A Dumoulin (M Bastareaud 61), W Fofana, B Dulin; F Michalak (R Talès 12), M Parra (R Kockott 69); E Ben Arous (V Debaty 61), G Guirado (D Szarzewski 57), R Slimani (N Mas 60), P Papé (Y Nyanga 48), Y Maestri, T Dusauroir (capt), B le Roux, L Picamoles (D Chouly 72).

**Try:** Picamoles. **Con:** Parra.  
**Pens:** Spedding, Parra.

**Yellow card:** Picamoles (47)

**REFEREE** Nigel Owens (Wales)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Julian Savea



## QUARTER-FINALS



**Argentine tango**  
Keith Earls is tackled

**IRELAND** 20  
**ARGENTINA** 43

Sunday 18 October, 1pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 72,316

**VITAL  
STATISTIC**

**43**

The most points  
Argentina have scored  
against a Tier One  
team, away from home

### IN THIS MATCH

Blitzing their way to a 17-0 lead in as many minutes, Argentina played a free-wheeling form of rugby that Ireland couldn't handle. The Irish clawed their way to within three points in the second half, Jordi Murphy with his first Test try, but Argentina's back three – who made 267 metres with ball in hand – again roared into life. Ireland have still never won a RWC knockout match.

### TURNING POINT

On 52 minutes Pumas tighthead Ramiro Herrera, who had been sin-binned earlier, charged head first into a ruck, belatedly using his arms. Ian Madigan kicked the



**Top view**  
Above the posts

penalty to cut the deficit to 20-23 but the prop escaped a red card. Soon afterwards, Madigan missed a chance to level and when Nicolás Sánchez made no mistake at the other end, he set in motion events that saw Argentina run away with the tie.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Flanker Juan Martín Fernández Lobbe: "We've had the chance to play in the four nations (Rugby Championship) and it's true we have benefited because it means we play against the best in the world. Also we have a very clear idea of what we want to do with the ball. Every time the ball came down on our side, what was most beautiful was that we tried to play it."

**Pumas roar**  
Matías Moroni  
celebrates his try



### AND THE LOSERS...

Flanker Chris Henry: "It just felt like every time you got the ball you got the chop. They were flying off the line and I don't think we've come across a team that gets off the line and chops people so hard. We didn't think this would be the end of the journey for us. When you invest so much time and effort, it's a tough day."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**IRELAND** R Kearney; T Bowe (L Fitzgerald 13), K Earls, R Henshaw, D Kearney; I Madigan, C Murray (E Reddan 70); C Healy (J McGrath 51),

R Best (R Strauss 66), M Ross (N White 51), I Henderson (D Ryan 71), D Toner, J Murphy (R Ruddock 70), C Henry, J Heaslip (capt).  
**Tries (2):** Fitzgerald, Murphy. **Cons:** Madigan 2. **Pens:** Madigan 2.  
**ARGENTINA** J Tuculet; S Cordero, M Moroni (J De la Fuente 68), JM Hernández, J Imhoff; N Sánchez, M Landajo (T Cubelli 53); M Ayerza (L Noguera Paz 67), A Creevy (capt, JS Montoya 54), R Herrera (P Orlandi 72), G Petti (M Alemanno 60), T Lavanini, P Matera, JM Fernández Lobbe, L Senatore (P Orlandi 23-27, F Isa 51).  
**Tries (4):** Moroni, Imhoff 2, Tuculet.  
**Cons:** Sánchez 4. **Pens:** Sánchez 5.  
**Yellow card:** Herrera (17)  
**REFEREE** Jérôme Garcès (France)  
**MAN OF THE MATCH** Nicolás Sánchez




**AUSTRALIA  
SCOTLAND**
**35  
34**

 Sunday 18 October, 4pm  
 Twickenham Att: 77,110

### IN THIS MATCH

In another pulsating tie, Australia, with Stephen Moore and Matt Giteau earning their 100th caps, ensured the semi-finals would be an all-southern hemisphere affair for the first time by securing a controversial win – uniquely, their third in succession at Twickenham. Hitherto near impregnable, the Wallabies conceded three tries to a Scotland team boosted by an 11th-hour reprieve for previously banned forwards Jonny Gray and Ross Ford. This was the Scots' record points tally in the fixture.



Look ref Greig Laidlaw protests

The last try, an interception by Mark Bennett, handed Scotland the lead in the dying minutes before a decisive penalty award swung things the other way...

### TURNING POINT

With 90 seconds to go, referee Craig Joubert adjudged replacement prop Jon Welsh to be in an offside position as he played the ball, thinking it came off a Scottish defender. He gave a penalty and Bernard Foley kicked the winning points. World Rugby later confirmed the penalty decision was incorrect as Australia's Nick Phipps had played the ball before Welsh.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Captain Stephen Moore: "I'm thrilled we won. I thought Scotland played really well. They threw everything at us. They played out of their skins."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Captain Greig Laidlaw: "I never had a chance to speak to the referee he was off that quick. It's a pretty upset dressing room, as you can imagine."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**AUSTRALIA** K Beale; A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau, D Mitchell; B Foley, W Genia (N Phipps


 Scotch corner  
 Seymour scores

### VITAL STATISTIC

**8**

The points Australia trailed by early on, making it their biggest RWC comeback

71); S Sio (J Slipper 50), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 62), S Kepu (G Holmes 54), K Douglas, R Simmons (D Mumm 65), S Fardy, M Hooper, B McCalman.  
**Tries (5):** Mitchell 2, Ashley-Cooper, Hooper, Kuridrani. **Cons:** Foley 2. **Pens:** Foley 2.  
**SCOTLAND** S Hogg; S Maitland, M Bennett, P Horne (R Vernon 71), T Seymour (S Lamont 63); F Russell, G Laidlaw (capt); A Dickinson (G Reid 47), R Ford (F Brown 54), WP Nel (J Welsh 75), J Gray (T Swinson 67), R Gray, B Cowan (J Strauss 67), J Hardie, D Denton.  
**Tries (3):** Horne, Seymour, Bennett. **Cons:** Laidlaw 2. **Pens:** Laidlaw 5.  
**Yellow card:** Maitland (42)  
**REFEREE** Craig Joubert (South Africa)  
**MAN OF THE MATCH** Matt Giteau


 Wandering Wallaby  
 Tevita Kuridrani breaks  
 past second-row Richie Gray



# POOL A

 <b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>35</b>
 <b>FIJI</b>	<b>11</b>

Friday 18 September, 8pm  
Twickenham Att: 80,015

## IN THIS MATCH

England toiled in the tournament opener but sneaked a bonus point with Billy Vunipola's last-gasp try. Their early penalty try was the second time the opening try of a World Cup was a penalty, after 1987.

## TURNING POINT

Fiji missed touch with a penalty in the 65th minute and Mike Brown's run from deep resulted in the England penalty that gave them breathing space, at 21-11.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Double try-scorer Mike Brown: "I wanted to get my hands on the ball the whole game. It was an emotional time for me, a dream come true. I'll always savour that."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Akapusi Qera: "We came out fighting at the start and competed with them in the middle, but still need to finish the game."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**ENGLAND** M Brown; A Watson, J Joseph, B Barritt (S Burgess 62), J May; G Ford (O Farrell 62), B Youngs (R Wigglesworth 52); J Marler (M Vunipola 52), T Youngs (R Webber 74), D Cole (K Brookes 68), G Parling (J Launchbury 52), C Lawes, T Wood, C Robshaw (capt), B Morgan (B Vunipola 52). **Tries (4):** Penalty, Brown 2, Vunipola. **Cons:** Ford, Farrell 2. **Pens:** Ford 2, Farrell.

**FIJI** M Talebula; W Nayacalevu, V Goneva, G Lovobalavu, N Nadolo; B Volavola, N Matawalu; C Ma'afu (P Ravai 74), S Koto (T Tuapati 74), M Saulo (I Colati 76), A Ratuniyarawa (T Cavubati ht), L Nakarawa, D Waqaniburotu (P Yato 60), A Qera (capt), S Matadigo.

**Try:** Nadolo. **Pens:** Nadolo, Volavola.

**Yellow card:** Matawalu (13)

**REFEREE** Jaco Peyper (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Mike Brown

 <b>WALES</b>	<b>54</b>
 <b>URUGUAY</b>	<b>9</b>

Sunday 20 September, 2.30pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 71,887

## IN THIS MATCH

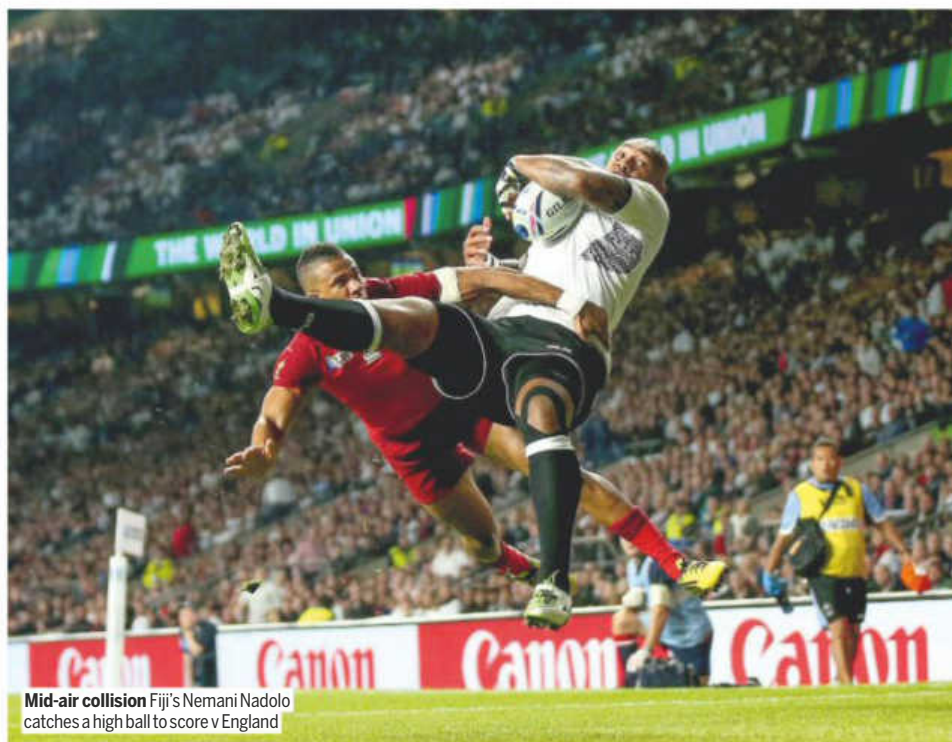
Wales centre Cory Allen scored a hat-trick – the first of this World Cup – but limped off with a torn hamstring in the 54th minute and was ruled out of the tournament.

## TURNING POINT

Uruguay led 6-0 after seven minutes but Wales scored the first of their eight tries from a 15th-minute lineout drive and it was largely one-way traffic thereafter.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Wales coach Warren Gatland: "The message at half-time was to take the legs



Mid-air collision Fiji's Nemani Nadolo catches a high ball to score v England

## POOL A FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	PTS
 <b>AUSTRALIA</b>	4	4	0	0	141	35	1	17
 <b>WALES</b>	4	3	0	1	111	62	1	13
 <b>ENGLAND</b>	4	2	0	2	133	75	3	11
 <b>FIJI</b>	4	1	0	3	84	101	1	5
 <b>URUGUAY</b>	4	0	0	4	30	226	0	0

from Uruguay in terms of scrum time and driving lineouts. They weren't easy to play against. They competed hard with the ball and were able to keep possession."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Uruguay coach Pablo Lemoine: "I'm proud of my players for the performance. In the first 20 minutes we felt comfortable but we knew Wales have too many options and ways to play the game."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**WALES** Liam Williams (M Morgan 35); A Cuthbert, C Allen (Lloyd Williams 54), S Williams, H Amos; R Priestland, G Davies; P James (A Jarvis 31), S Baldwin (K Owens 62), S Lee (T Francis 40), J Ball, L Charteris (D Day 46), S Warburton (capt, D Lydiate 58, J King 74), J Tipuric, J King (R Moriarty 46).

**Tries (8):** Lee, Allen 3, Amos, Davies 2, Tipuric.

**Cons:** Priestland 7.

**URUGUAY** G Mieres; S Gibernau, J Prada (F Bulanti 74), A Vilaseca, R Silva; F Berchesi, A Ormaechea (A Duran 79); A Corral (M Sanguinetti 74), C Arbolea (G Kessler 77), M Sagario (O Duran 72), S Vilaseca (capt, A Alonso 74), J Zerbino (F Lamanna 61), J Gaminara, M Beer (J De Freitas 58), A Nieto.

**Pens:** Berchesi 3.

**REFEREE** Romain Poite (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Cory Allen

## VITAL STATISTIC

# 10

The most number of turnovers won in the pool stage, made by Wallaby David Pocock

▼ **Bittersweet** Cory Allen got a treble, then limped out the RWC



 <b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>28</b>
 <b>FIJI</b>	<b>13</b>

Wednesday 23 September, 4.45pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 67,253

## IN THIS MATCH

The Wallabies failed to bag a bonus point, losing their way in the second half. David Pocock scored his first Aussie tries since the last RWC, when he notched a brace v Russia, while Fiji made 11 offloads to two.

## TURNING POINT

Sekope Kepu's 43rd-minute try seemed to inspire Fiji. Trailing 25-3, they stopped kicking the ball and hit back with a Ben Volavola try, Nemani Nadolo's conversion bringing up the 15,000th World Cup point.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Australia flanker Michael Hooper: "They really took it to us in the set-piece and made us work really hard. There were points when we were pretty cooked."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Fiji lock Nemias Soqeta: "We didn't do a lot of running. We pretty much defended the whole game and all credit to Australia."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**AUSTRALIA** I Folau; A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau (K Beale 72), R Horne; B Foley (M Toomua 78), W Genia (N Phipps 67); S Sio (J Slipper 56-67), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 67), S Kepu (G Holmes 56), K Douglas (W Skelton 71), R Simmons (D Mumm 62), S Fardy, M Hooper, D Pocock.

**Tries (3):** Pocock 2, Kepu. **Cons:** Foley 2.

**Pens:** Foley 3.

**Yellow card:** Kuridrani (73)



**FIJI** M Talebula; W Nayacalevu (A Tikoirotuma 5), V Goneva, G Lovobalavu, N Nadolo; B Volavola, N Matawalu (N Kenatale 50); C Ma'afu, T Tupati, M Saulo (I Colati 78), T Cavubati (N Soqeta 62), L Nakarawa, P Yato (P Ravai 35-40), A Qera (capt), N Talei (M Ravulo 67).

**Try:** Volavola. **Con:** Nadolo. **Pens:** Nadolo 2. **Yellow card:** Ma'afu (30)

**REFEREE** Glen Jackson (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** David Pocock

## ENGLAND WALES

25  
28

Saturday 26 September, 8pm  
Twickenham Att: 81,129

### IN THIS MATCH

Calamity for England, who let slip a 22-12 lead against a Welsh team on their knees after yet more injuries. It was their first loss to a northern hemisphere team in a RWC match on home soil. Chris Robshaw led England for the 40th time, overtaking Martin Johnson, and Dan Biggar's 23 points set a Wales record for a RWC match.

### TURNING POINT

Chris Robshaw's decision to go for the corner rather than the posts in the 77th minute. Wales pushed England's Maul into touch and closed out the game. Had those points been slotted and the game drawn, England would have reached the last eight.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Wales captain Sam Warburton:

"Twickenham is the hardest place in the world to come to. It's one of my best wins."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Owen Farrell: "You tend to back yourself as a kicker but I wanted to back the decision. We wanted to win. It's a risk-reward thing. If it comes off the decision is brilliant, but it hasn't turned out that way this time."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ENGLAND** M Brown; A Watson, B Barritt, S Burgess (G Ford 70), J May; O Farrell, B Youngs (R Wigglesworth 49); J Marler (M Vunipola 61), T Youngs (R Webber 67), D Cole (K Brookes 72), G Parling, C Lawes (J Launchbury ht), T Wood, C Robshaw (capt), B Vunipola (J Haskell 63).

**Try:** May. **Con:** Farrell. **Pens:** Farrell 5. **DG:** Farrell.

**WALES** Liam Williams (R Priestland 67); G North, S Williams (A Cuthbert 63), J Roberts, H Amos (Lloyd Williams 67); D Biggar, G Davies; G Jenkins, S Baldwin (K Owens 49), T Francis (S Lee 49), B Davies (L Charteris 70), AW Jones, D Lydiate (J Tipuric 70), S Warburton (capt), T Faletau.

**Try:** G Davies. **Con:** Biggar. **Pens:** Biggar 7.

**REFEREE** Jérôme Garcès (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Dan Biggar

## AUSTRALIA URUGUAY

65  
3

Sunday 27 September, noon  
Villa Park Att: 39,605

### IN THIS MATCH

Plain sailing for a revamped Wallaby side that ran in 11 tries. Drew Mitchell's brace made him their record RWC scorer with 12, passing Chris Latham (11) and David Campese (10). No team at this World Cup was to match the Aussies' 65 points.

### TURNING POINT

Kurtley Beale's decision to take a quick lineout in the fifth minute set out the Aussies' stall – and the fact Drew Mitchell knocked on his pass with space in front of him also showed that errors would play a key role. They may have scored 11 tries but many opportunities were missed.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Australia flanker Sean McMahon: "It's like dreams becoming reality for me. To get a Man of the Match performance in front of such a great crowd is unbelievable."



▲ **Mumm's the word**  
The Aussie lock rises high against Uruguay

### AND THE LOSERS...

Uruguay fly-half Felipe Berchesi: "We defended tragically at moments, so they broke our line many times. We do not deserve to lose by that many points."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**AUSTRALIA** K Beale; J Tomane, H Speight, M Toomua (T Kuridrani 78), D Mitchell; Q Cooper, N Phipps; S Sio (S Kepu 49), T Polota-Nau, T Smith, D Mumm (capt), W Skelton (K Douglas 57), B McCalman, S McMahon, W Palu (R Simmons ht).

**Tries (11):** McMahon 2, Tomane, Mumm, Speight, McCalman 2, Mitchell 2, Toomua, Kuridrani.

**Cons:** Cooper 5.

**Yellow card:** Cooper (13)

**URUGUAY** G Mieres; L Leivas, J Prada, A Vilaseca (A Roman 71), R Silva; F Berchesi (A Duran 71), A Ormaechea; M Sanguinetti (N Klappenbach 54), G Kessler (C Arboleja ht), M Sagario (O Duran 54), S Vilaseca (capt), F Lamanna (D Magno 55), J De Freitas (A Nieto 55), M Beer, J Gaminara (F Bascou 71).

**Pen:** Berchesi.

**REFEREE** Pascal Gauzère (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Sean McMahon

▼ **Full-blooded Jamie**  
Roberts beats Sam Burgess's tackle at HQ



## WALES FIJI

23  
13

Thursday 1 October, 4.45pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 71,576

### IN THIS MATCH

Five days after their Twickenham heroics, Wales had to dig deep. The attendance for RWC 2015 passed a million, Niki Goneva became Fiji's record RWC try-scorer with five and Gareth Davies became the second Welshman to score a try in each of his first three RWC matches, after Sonny Parker.

### TURNING POINT

This was a helter-skelter game, the teams making 1,155 metres, 16 clean breaks and



## POOL A

20 offloads between them, but the open approach hurt Wales in the second half. They gave Fiji too much space to attack and had to close out the game with penalties.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Wales defence coach Shaun Edwards: "It was a brutal game, a bruising encounter. We were trying to limit the number of loose-ball situations but in the 20 minutes after half-time we weren't very accurate."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Fiji wing Timoci Nagusa: "This was a big performance, especially from the forwards. Our lineouts and scrum were outstanding."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**WALES** M Morgan (J Hook 71); A Cuthbert (L Williams 21-27), T Morgan, J Roberts, G North; D Biggar (R Priestland 73), G Davies; G Jenkins (A Jarvis 67), S Baldwin (K Owens 55), T Francis (S Lee 50), B Davies (L Charteris 14-27, 64), AW Jones, D Lydiate (J Tipuric 70), S Warburton (capt), T Faletau. **Tries (2):** G Davies, Baldwin. **Cons:** Biggar 2. **Pens:** Biggar 3.

**FIJI** M Talebula; T Nagusa, V Goneva (J Matavesi 71), L Botia (K Murimurivalu 75), A Tikoirotuma; B Volavola, N Kenatale (H Seniloli 71); C Ma'afu (P Ravai 77), S Koto (V Veikoso 75), M Saulo (L Atalifo 77), T Cavubati (N Soqeta 70), L Nakarawa, D Waqaniburotu (M Ravulo 70), A Qera (capt), N Talei. **Try:** Goneva. **Con:** Volavola. **Pens:** Volavola 2.

**REFEREE** John Lacey (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Gareth Davies

	<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>33</b>

Saturday 3 October, 8pm  
Twickenham Att: 81,010

### IN THIS MATCH

The 'Pool of Death' claimed a giant victim as England crashed out amid a chorus of boos. They failed to reach the knockout stage for the first time, becoming the first host nation to exit in the pool stage, while this was Australia's biggest Twickers win.

### TURNING POINT

Early injuries often hinder teams but when Rob Horne was replaced by Kurtley Beale after just 11 minutes it added a spark to the Aussie back-line. He played a decisive



**Rearguard action**  
The Wallabies keep out Wales' George North in a try-less classic

role in Bernard Foley's second try, which gave the Wallabies a 17-3 half-time lead.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Australia No 10 Bernard Foley: "I was lucky to be on the end of some really good team structure. The work-rate was world-class."

### AND THE LOSERS...

England flanker Tom Wood: "I can't explain how much it hurts or articulate what went wrong. Australia were razor-sharp and we didn't have answers."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ENGLAND** M Brown; A Watson, J Joseph, B Barritt (S Burgess 64), J May (G Ford ht); O Farrell, B Youngs (R Wigglesworth 50); J Marler (M Vunipola 50), T Youngs (R Webber 61), D Cole (K Brookes 54), J Launchbury (G Kruijs 69), G Parling, T Wood, C Robshaw (capt), B Morgan (N Easter 57). **Try:** Watson. **Con:** Farrell. **Pens:** Farrell 2.

**Yellow card:** Owen Farrell (70)

**AUSTRALIA** I Folau (M Toomua 65); A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau, R Horne (K Beale 11); B Foley, W Genia (N Phipps 61); S Sio (J Slipper 57), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 65), S Kepu (G Holmes 57), K Douglas, R Simmons (D Mumm 65), S Fardy (B McCalman 76), M Hooper, D Pocock. **Tries:** Foley 2, Giteau. **Cons:** Foley 3. **Pens:** Foley 4.

**REFEREE** Romain Poite (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Joe Launchbury

	<b>FIJI</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>URUGUAY</b>	<b>15</b>

Tuesday 6 October, 8pm  
Stadium MK Att: 30,048

### IN THIS MATCH

Agustín Ormaechea saw red in a feisty affair. Fiji ended a record-equalling run of six straight RWC defeats and Uruguay got their first RWC try since now-coach Pablo Lemoine crossed England's line in 2003.



**Killer blow**  
Bernard Foley scores his second try

▼ **Final straw** Owen Farrell is yellow-carded







## TURNING POINT

The early sin-binning of Ormaechea for an illegal tackle, and resulting penalty try.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Fiji wing Nemani Nadolo: "There are always what-ifs. But we've played three top teams in 13 days. We're pleased with our performance."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Wing Santiago Gibernau: "We are feeling mad in one way and sad. There were four tries we could avoid but it was a good game."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**FIJI** K Murimurivalu; A Tikoirotuma, V Goneva (T Nagusa 65), L Botia, N Nadolo; B Volavola (J Matavesi 69), N Kenatale (H Seniloli 61); C Ma'afu (D Waqaniburotu 79), S Koto (V Veikoso 75), L Atalifo (T Koroi 75), A Ratuniyarawa (T Cavubati 56), L Nakarawa, D Waqaniburotu (P Ravia 67), A Qera (capt), S Matadigo (N Talei 56).

**Tries (7):** Penalty 2, Kenatale, Nakarawa, Cuvabati, Murimurivalu, Nadolo. **Cons:** Nadolo 6. **Yellow card:** Ma'afu (66)

**URUGUAY** G Mieres; S Gibernau (F Bulanti 75), J Prada, A Vilaseca (J Etcheverry 65), R Silva; A Duran, A Ormaechea; A Corral (M Sanguinetti ht), C Arbolea, M Sagario (O Duran 65), S Vilaseca (capt), J Zerbino (M Palomeque 65), JM Gaminara (J De Freitas 75), M Beer (F Lamanna 71), A Nieto.

**Tries (2):** Arbolea, Ormaechea.  
**Con:** Ormaechea. **Pen:** Duran.  
**Yellow card:** Ormaechea (3, 66)  
**Red card:** Ormaechea (66)  
**REFEREE** JP Doyle (England)  
**MAN OF THE MATCH** Leone Nakarawa



Acrobatic Nemia  
Kenatale flies over for Fiji

**AUSTRALIA**  
**WALES**

15  
6

Saturday 10 October, 4.45pm  
Twickenham Att: 80,863

## IN THIS MATCH

A try-less classic as Australia withstood a goal-line siege with 13 men to top Pool A. It was the lowest-scoring game between the teams since 1958 and extended the Aussies' winning run v Wales to 11 Tests.

## TURNING POINT

When Australia were awarded a penalty after 13 minutes of heroic defence – George North pinged for holding on – it was clear they would get the win.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Australia coach Michael Cheika: "We just had to show a different skin. There were plenty of imperfections, something we have to sort if we want to get to the final."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Alun Wyn Jones: "We were held up (over the line) three times. We should have capitalised when they were down to 13."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**AUSTRALIA** I Folau; A Ashley-Cooper, T Kuridrani, M Giteau (M Toomua 67), D Mitchell (K Beale 67); B Foley, W Genia (N Phipps 68); S Sio (J Slipper 63), S Moore (capt, T Polota-Nau 67), S Kepu (G Holmes 56), K Douglas, D Mumm, S Fardy, S McMahon (B McCalman 49), D Pocock (R Simmons 60). **Pens:** Foley 5.

**Yellow cards:** Genia (57), Mumm (60)

**WALES** G Anscombe; A Cuthbert, G North, J Roberts (Lloyd Williams 80), Liam Williams (J Hook 74); D Biggar (R Priestland 74), G Davies; P James (A Jarvis 73), S Baldwin (K Owens 73), S Lee (T Francis 54), L Charteris, AW Jones, S Warburton (capt), J Tipuric (R Moriarty 73), T Faletau.

**Pens:** Biggar 2.

**Yellow card:** Cuthbert (77)

**REFEREE** Craig Joubert (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Gareth Davies



▲ Elation Agustin  
Ormaechea celebrates  
his try – he later saw red

**ENGLAND**  
**URUGUAY**

60  
3

Saturday 10 October, 8pm  
Manchester City Stadium Att: 50,778

## IN THIS MATCH

At 37, Nick Easter became the oldest player to score a World Cup hat-trick. It was also the first RWC match where a forward and a back (Jack Nowell) have scored hat-tricks. Henry Slade scored the 200th try of this World Cup.

## TURNING POINT

England went from having one playmaker against Wales and Australia to four here – and they cut loose with ten tries.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

England centre Henry Slade: "We talked about this performance being what people remember. It's disappointing not qualifying from the group, but we wanted to go out tonight with a bang."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Uruguay coach Pablo Lemoine: "The players put their lives to one side for four years to train and be here. Nobody can say they didn't give it everything."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**ENGLAND** A Goode; A Watson (M Brown 67), H Slade, O Farrell (J Joseph 59), J Nowell; G Ford, D Care (R Wigglesworth 72); M Vunipola (J Marler 72), T Youngs (J George 30), D Cole (D Wilson 43), J Launchbury, G Parling (G Kruis 56), J Haskell (T Wood 61), C Robshaw (capt), N Easter. **Tries (10):** Watson 2, Easter 3, Slade, Nowell 3, penalty. **Cons:** Farrell 4, Ford.

**URUGUAY** G Mieres; S Gibernau, J Prada, A Vilaseca, R Silva; F Berchesi (A Duran 73), A Ormaechea (M Blengio 73); M Sanguinetti (A Corral 63), C Arbolea (O Duran 71), M Sagario (N Klappenbach 63), S Vilaseca (capt), J Zerbino (M Palomeque 63), JM Gaminara, M Beer (D Magno 69), A Nieto (A Alonso 69). **Pen:** Berchesi.

**Yellow card:** S Vilaseca (40)

**REFEREE** Chris Pollock (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Nick Easter

▼ Nice to meet you  
Alejo Duran clashes  
with Joe Launchbury





## POOL B



**Brighton rocks**  
Japan enjoy their amazing win over the two-time champions

## SOUTH AFRICA 32 JAPAN 34

Saturday 19 September, 4.45pm  
Brighton Community Stadium Att: 29,290

### 🕒 IN THIS MATCH

Sensational! Japan produced one of the great sporting upsets after a last-play try that sent the Brighton crowd wild. In their first meeting with South Africa, they fielded their most-capped side ever (603 caps) and became the only nation to have a 100% winning record against the Boks!

### 🕒 TURNING POINT

Japan captain Michael Leitch's decision to go for a win from a late penalty rather than choosing a kick to draw. He opted for a 5m lineout and then, from a penalty, a scrum from which Japan worked the phases to put Karne Hesketh in for the winning try.

### 🏆 WINNERS' PODIUM

Try-scorer Karne Hesketh: "I remember crossing the line and thinking, 'We've done it'. To be on the end of that was special."

### 🕒 AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Heyneke Meyer: "We represent a proud nation and we just weren't good

enough. We have to take responsibility and apologise to the nation."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** Z Kirchner; B Habana, J Kriel, J de Villiers (capt), L Mvovo (JP Pietersen 70); P Lambie (H Pollard 58), R Pienaar (F du Preez 58); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 54, Mtawarira 79), B du Plessis (A Strauss 54), J du Plessis (C Oosthuizen 54), L de Jager (E Etzebeth 68), V Matfield, F Louw, PS du Toit (S Kolisi 57, J du Plessis 79), S Burger.  
**Tries (4):** Louw, B du Plessis, de Jager, Strauss.  
**Cons:** Lambie 2, Pollard. **Pens:** Lambie, Pollard.  
**Yellow card:** Oosthuizen (78)

**JAPAN** A Goromaru; A Yamada (K Hesketh 78), M Sa'u, H Tatekawa, K Matsushima; K Ono (Y Tamura 74), F Tanaka (A Hiwasa 67); M Mikami (K Inagaki 58), S Horie (T Kizu 70), K Hatakeyama (H Yamashita 10-20, 54), L Thompson, H Ono (S Makabe 54), M Leitch (capt), M Broadhurst, H Tui (A Mafi 46).

**Tries (3):** Leitch, Goromaru, Hesketh.  
**Cons:** Goromaru 2. **Pens:** Goromaru 5.

**REFEREE** Jérôme Garcès (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Fumiaki Tanaka

## SAMOA 25 USA 16

Sunday 20 September, noon  
Brighton Community Stadium Att: 29,178

### 🕒 IN THIS MATCH

The captains of both teams – Ofisa Treviranus and Chris Wyles – scored a try

in a RWC game for the first time. Tusi Pisi became the first player to kick penalties for Samoa in two different World Cups.

### 🕒 TURNING POINT

When USA centre Thretton Palamo floored Rey Lee-Lo in the first minute, you knew this was going to be a tough, physical encounter. Samoa came off better than their centre overall.

### 🏆 WINNERS' PODIUM

Samoa coach Stephen Betham: "We were forcing too many 50-50 passes but we'll take the win. We're looking for consistency and we haven't got that yet."

### 🕒 AND THE LOSERS...

USA captain Chris Wyles: "Our discipline and execution let us down. We gave away too many penalties, it was disappointing."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SAMOA** T Nanai-Williams; K Pisi, P Perez, R Lee-Lo (M Stanley 1-9), A Tuilagi (F Autagavaia 73); T Pisi (M Stanley 58), K Fotuali'i; S Taulafo, O Avei (M Matu'u 66), A Perenise (C Johnston 51), F Paulo, J Tekori (F Levave 58), M Fa'asavalu (A Fa'osiliva 51), J Lam, O Treviranus (capt).

**Tries (2):** Nanai-Williams, Treviranus.  
**Pens:** T Pisi 4, Stanley.

**USA** B Scully (B Thompson 54); T Ngwenya, S Kelly, T Palamo, C Wyles (capt); AJ MacGinty, M

👉 **Samoa sandwich**  
Eagles flanker Danny Barrett gets crunched





Petri; E Fry (O Kilifi 71), Z Fenoglio (P Thiel 51), T Lamositele (C Baumann 71), H Smith (C Dolan 51), G Peterson (D Barrett 58), A McFarland, A Durutalo, S Manoa.

**Tries (2):** Wyles, Baumann. **Pens:** MacGinty 2.

**REFEREE** George Clancy (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Tim Nanai-Williams

## SCOTLAND JAPAN

45  
10

Wednesday 23 September, 2.30pm  
Kingsholm Att: 14,354

### IN THIS MATCH

Scotland exploited the fatigue of a Japan side severely impeded by a four-day turnaround, scoring five second-half tries to get their campaign off to a flyer.

### TURNING POINT

Japan had Scotland worried when they got to 12-10 just after half-time, but John Hardie scored a try he helped engineer and Scotland kicked on from there.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Fly-half Finn Russell: "I've got a win and a try on my birthday! The score flattered us, it was such a tight game for 50 minutes."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Scrum-half Fumiaki Tanaka: "We played good defence in the first half but gave away a lot of penalties. It (the short turnaround) can serve only for an excuse."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SCOTLAND** S Hogg (S Maitland 65); T Seymour, M Bennett (P Horne 74), M Scott, S Lamont; F Russell, G Laidlaw (capt), A Dickinson (R Grant 64), R Ford (F Brown 70), WP Nel (J Welsh 70), G Gilchrist (R Gray 49), J Gray, R Wilson (J Strauss 56), J Hardie, D Denton. **Tries (5):** Hardie, Bennett 2, Seymour, Russell. **Cons:** Laidlaw 4. **Pens:** Laidlaw 4.

**JAPAN** A Goromaru; K Matsushima, M Sau, Y Tamura, K Fukuoka; H Tatekawa (K Hesketh 71), F Tanaka (A Hiwasa 64); K Inagaki (M Mikami ht), S Horie (T Kizu 70), H Yamashita (K Hatakeyama 52), L Thompson (S Ito 64), J Ives (S Makabe 60), M Leitch (capt), M Broadhurst, A Mafi (H Tui 44).

**Try:** Mafi. **Con:** Goromaru. **Pen:** Goromaru.

**Yellow card:** Matsushima (22)

**REFEREE** John Lacey (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Greig Laidlaw

## SOUTH AFRICA SAMOA

46  
6

Saturday 26 September, 4.45pm  
Villa Park Att: 39,526

### IN THIS MATCH

The Boks recovered from the shock loss to Japan in brutal fashion, JP Pietersen scoring three of their six tries. But Samoa had something to smile about – Ken, George and Tusi Pisi became the first trio of brothers to play in a RWC match.

## POOL B FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	PTS
SOUTH AFRICA	4	3	0	1	176	56	4	16
SCOTLAND	4	3	0	1	136	93	2	14
JAPAN	4	3	0	1	98	100	0	12
SAMOA	4	1	0	3	69	124	2	6
USA	4	0	0	4	50	156	0	0

### TURNING POINT

Samoa's TJ loane flattened several Boks in the opening five minutes but still they ran at him. South Africa shirked nothing.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Wing JP Pietersen: "We got a big wake-up call last week. The way we performed here, I doubt it will happen again."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Wing Ken Pisi: "We've been waiting for a while and finally got the opportunity. We talked to Mum and Dad. They feel blessed."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux; JP Pietersen, J de Villiers (capt, P Lambie 72), D De Allende (J Kriel 48, de Villiers 77), B Habana; H Pollard, F du Preez (R Pienaar 74); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 62), A Strauss (S Brits 67), J du Plessis (F Malherbe 53), E Etzebeth, V Matfield (L de Jager 54), F Louw, S Burger (S Kolisi 68), D Vermeulen. **Tries (6):** Pietersen 3, Burger, Brits, Habana. **Cons:** Pollard, Lambie. **Pens:** Pollard 4. **SAMOA** T Nanai-Williams; K Pisi, P Perez, R Lee-Lo, A Tuilagi (G Pisi 66); M Stanley (T Pisi 53), K Fotuali'i (V Afemai 77); S Taulafo

(V Afatia 63), M Matu'u (O Avei 51), C Johnston (A Perenise 51), T Paulo, J Tekori (F Levave 47), TJ loane, J Lam, O Treviranus (capt, V Tuilagi 61). **Pens:** Stanley 2.

**REFEREE** Wayne Barnes (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Handre Pollard

## SCOTLAND USA

39  
16

Sunday 27 September, 2.30pm  
Elland Road Att: 33,521

### IN THIS MATCH

Scotland lost Grant Gilchrist to injury and trailed at half-time, but solid defence – with 17 tackles by Al Strokosch – and a galvanising bench saw them home in style.

### TURNING POINT

Behind by 13-6, Vern Cotter introduced first-choice props Alasdair Dickinson and WP Nel at half-time and immediately found the platform to run in five tries.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Vern Cotter: "These guys were bigger, very hard-hitting and came off the

line with speed. It took time to adapt to them but we've adapted."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Captain Chris Wyles: "Scotland took hold of that second half and won it very comfortably. Our discipline wasn't good."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SCOTLAND** S Hogg; S Maitland, M Bennett, P Horne (M Scott 55), T Visser; F Russell (D Weir 60), H Pyrgos (capt, G Laidlaw 53); R Grant (A Dickinson ht), R Ford (K Bryce 78), J Welsh (WP Nel ht), R Gray, G Gilchrist (T Swinson 17), A Strokosch, R Wilson (F Brown 46), J Strauss.

**Tries (5):** Visser, Maitland, Nel, Scott, Weir.

**Cons:** Russell, Laidlaw 3. **Pens:** Russell, Hogg.

**USA** C Wyles (capt); T Ngwenya, S Kelly, T Palamo, B Scully (F Niua 59); AJ MacGinty, M Petri (S Suniula 50); E Fry (O Kilifi 67), P Thiel (Z Fenoglio 64), T Lamositele (C Baumann 69), H Smith (C Dolan 43), G Peterson (D Barrett 50), A McFarland, A Durutalo (J Quill 59), S Manoa.

**Try:** Lamositele. **Con:** MacGinty. **Pens:** MacGinty 3.

**REFEREE** Chris Pollock (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Stuart Hogg

## SAMOA JAPAN

5  
26

Saturday 3 October, 2.30pm  
Stadium MK Att: 29,019

### IN THIS MATCH

25 million people watched on Japanese TV as Ayumu Goromaru kicked 16 points to punish Samoa's ill-discipline. Alesana Tuilagi was later banned for five weeks for striking Harumichi Tatekawa with his knee – a verdict that caused media outrage for its severity. It was cut to two on appeal.

### TURNING POINT

Japan's 24th-minute penalty try did for Samoa, who were 20-0 adrift by the break.

**High hurdler**  
Sean Maitland takes the aerial route v USA





## POOL B

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Eddie Jones: "Our forwards were fantastic today. We shut Samoa out with some set-piece dominance and our work in defence round the ruck was first class."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Prop Census Johnston: "It has become a bit of a pattern in Samoan and Pacific Island rugby. We lack a bit of discipline and that was the difference for us."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SAMOA** T Nanai-Williams; K Pisi, P Perez, J Leota, A Tuilagi (V Afatia 22-29, R Lee-Lo 47); T Pisi, K Fotuali'i (V Afemai 73); S Taulafo (V Afatia 61), W Avei (M Matu'u 55), C Johnston (A Perenise 50), T Paulo, K Thompson, O Trevisan (capt, S Tuilagi 69), TJ Ioane (J Lam 47), F Levave.

**Try:** Perez.

**Yellow cards:** Levave (15), Taulafo (18), Paulo (77) **JAPAN** A Goromaru; A Yamada (K Hesketh 55), M Sau (T Kizu 71), H Tatekawa, K Matsushima; K Ono (J Ives ht), F Tanaka (A Hiwasa 71); K Inagaki, S Horie, K Hatakeyama (H Yamashita 64), L Thompson, H Ono (J Ives 40), M Leitch (capt), M Broadhurst (H Tui 64), R Holani (A Mafi 59).

#### Great finish Akimoto

Yamada scores at MK



**Tries (2):** Penalty, Yamada. **Cons:** Goromaru 2. **Pens:** Goromaru 4.

**REFEREE** Craig Joubert (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Ayumu Goromaru

	<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	<b>34</b>
	<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>16</b>

Saturday 3 October, 4.45pm  
St James' Park Att: 50,900

### IN THIS MATCH

Scotland rested one or two players and never threatened to cause an upset after falling 20-3 behind by half-time. But they dug in to deny the Springboks a try bonus.

### TURNING POINT

Scotland were again slow out the blocks and left themselves too much to do. Tommy Seymour's interception try (49 mins), laid on by Duncan Weir, helped stem the tide.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Scrum-half Fourie du Preez: "We've been under immense pressure these past two games, the most I've known in my life. I'd say it's been more than in the 2007 final."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Fly-half Duncan Weir: "We need to start going out and imposing our game as quickly as we can, not waiting to see what the opposition is going to throw at us."



#### Record haul

Habana caught Lomu with his Stratford hat-trick

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux; JP Pietersen (P Lambie 70), J Kriel, D De Allende (J Serfontein 75), B Habana; H Pollard, F du Preez (capt, R Pienaar 78); T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 60), B du Plessis (A Strauss 56), J du Plessis (F Malherbe 50), E Etzebeth, L de Jager (PS du Toit 74), F Louw, S Burger (W Alberts 70), D Vermeulen.

**Tries (3):** B du Plessis, Pietersen, Habana.

**Cons:** Pollard 2. **Pens:** Pollard 4. **DG:** Pollard.

**Yellow card:** J du Plessis (34)

**SCOTLAND** S Hogg (S Lamont 63); T Seymour, R Vernon (P Horne 65), M Scott, T Visser; D Weir, G Laidlaw (capt, S Hidalgo-Clyne 70); G Reid (A Dickinson 51), F Brown (R Ford 60-77), WP Nel (J Welsh 63), R Gray, J Gray (T Swinson 68), J Strauss (R Wilson 29-33, 55), B Cowan, D Denton.

**Try:** Seymour. **Con:** Laidlaw. **Pens:** Laidlaw 2, Weir.

**Yellow card:** Laidlaw (53)

**REFEREE** Nigel Owens (Wales)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Lood de Jager

	<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>USA</b>	<b>0</b>

Wednesday 7 October, 4.45pm  
Olympic Stadium Att: 54,658

### IN THIS MATCH

The Boks routed an Eagles side that was nilled for the first time since 1987. Bryan Habana scored a hat-trick to equal Jonah Lomu as the joint top RWC try-scorer (15).

### TURNING POINT

Habana's try on 42 minutes, the Boks' third, seemed to break the Eagles' resolve.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Heyneke Meyer: "That's Springbok rugby, that's power rugby. The only team I wouldn't want to play is Japan!"

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Mike Tolkin: "In the first half I was so pleased with how our guys performed, but once the Springboks got front-foot ball it really wore our guys down quickly."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SOUTH AFRICA** W le Roux; B Habana (J Serfontein 22-26), J Kriel, D De Allende (J Serfontein 60), L Mvovo; H Pollard (M Steyn 56), F du Preez (capt, R Paige 63), T Mtawarira (T Nyakane 56), B du

Plessis (S Brits 56), F Malherbe (C Oosthuizen 60), E Etzebeth, L de Jager (PS du Toit 63), F Louw, S Burger (W Alberts 48), D Vermeulen. **Tries (10):** De Allende, Penalty, Habana 3, B du Plessis, Louw 2, Kriel, Mvovo. **Cons:** Pollard 4, Steyn 3.

**USA** B Scully (C Wyles 70); B Thompson, F Niua, A Suniula, Z Test; S Suniula, N Kruger; O Kilifi (M Moeakiola 58), P Thiel (J Taufetee 72), C Baumann, L Stanfill, M Trouville (Z Fenoglio 70), D Barrett (A McFarland 57), J Quill, S Manoa (capt, C Dolan 48).

**REFEREE** Pascal Gaüzère (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Damien De Allende

	<b>SAMOA</b>	<b>33</b>
	<b>SCOTLAND</b>	<b>36</b>

Saturday 10 October, 2.30pm  
St James' Park Att: 51,982

### IN THIS MATCH

Samoa saved their best for last, running almost 500m with ball in hand and scoring four tries in a devil-may-care performance. A boatload of points by Greig Laidlaw ensured the Scots made the quarters.

### TURNING POINT

Six minutes from time, Scotland opted for a scrum in front of the posts and Laidlaw darted over to open a ten-point cushion.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Captain Greig Laidlaw: "It's probably the greatest honour of my career. Our goal was to qualify for the quarter-finals and we're not finished yet. There's more to come."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Samoa coach Stephen Betham: "It's very frustrating. We played our finest rugby in our final game but we fell short."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**SAMOA** T Nanai-Williams; P Perez, G Pisi, R Lee-Lo, F Autagavaia (K Pisi 71); T Pisi (P Faapale 71), K Fotuali'i (capt, V Afemai 79); S Taulafo (V Afatia 59), M Leiataua (M Matu'u 73), C Johnston (A Perenise 59), T Paulo, K Thompson (F Levave 29), M Fa'asavalu, J Lam, A Faosiliva (V Tuilagi 59).

**Tries (4):** T Pisi, Leiataua, Lee-Lo, M Matu'u.

**Cons:** T Pisi, Faapale. **Pens:** T Pisi 3.

**SCOTLAND** S Hogg (S Lamont 70); S Maitland, M Bennett, M Scott (P Horne 76), T Seymour; F Russell, G Laidlaw (capt); A Dickinson





**Fall guy** Ryan Wilson is upended during the Scots' humdinger v Samoa

(G Reid 23-28), R Ford (F Brown 65), WP Nel, R Gray, J Gray (T Swinson 62), R Wilson (J Strauss 53), J Hardie, D Denton.

**Tries (3):** Seymour, Hardie, Laidlaw.

**Cons:** Laidlaw 3. **Pens:** Laidlaw 5.

**Yellow card:** Wilson (28)

**REFEREE** Jaco Peyper (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** John Hardie

**USA**  
**JAPAN**

**18**  
**28**

Sunday 11 October, 8pm  
Kingsholm Att: 14,517

### IN THIS MATCH

Japan became the first team to win three pool games yet not reach the quarter-finals.

### TURNING POINT

Takudzwa Ngwenya's try put the Eagles 8-7 up but they failed to gather the restart and Yoshikazu Fujita crossed to restore a lead that Japan never looked like losing.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Eddie Jones: "We came in on the bus and saw all these supporters with Japanese flags who didn't look Japanese. What a wonderful thing for the team to have achieved that. Before this tournament, Japan was one of the joke teams."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Mike Tolkin: "We were inconsistent in all games, including tonight. We showed moments of brilliance but let ourselves down with simple errors."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**USA** C Wyles (capt); T Ngwenya, S Kelly, T Palamo, Z Test; AJ MacGinty, M Petri; E Fry, Z Fenoglio (P Thiel 63), T Lamositele, H Smith (C Dolan 30), G Peterson (J Quill 76), A McFarland (D Barrett 63), A Durutalo, S Manoa.

**Tries (2):** Ngwenya, Wyles. **Con:** MacGinty.

**Pens:** MacGinty 2.

**Yellow card:** Fry (60)

**JAPAN** A Goromaru; Y Fujita, H Tatekawa, C Wing, K Matsushima (K Hesketh 48-56); K Ono (K Hesketh 72), F Tanaka (A Hiwasa 61); K Inagaki (M Mikami 58), S Horie (T Kizu 76), H Yamashita (K Hatakeyama 40), L Thompson, J Ives (S Makabe 67), M Leitch (capt), M Broadhurst (H Tui 72), R Holani (A Mafi 40).

**Tries (3):** Matsushima, Fujita, Mafi.

**Cons:** Goromaru 2. **Pens:** Goromaru 3.

**REFEREE** Glen Jackson (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Ayumu Goromaru



**Pacific fire** Ken Pisi scores as Samoa go down fighting



**Stir Fry** Japan's Ryu Koiniashi Holani tackles USA's Eric Fry



## POOL C

 <b>TONGA</b>	<b>10</b>
 <b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>17</b>

Saturday 19 September, noon  
Kingsholm Att: 14,200

## IN THIS MATCH

Georgia scrum-half Vasil Lobzhanidze made history by becoming the youngest RWC player of all time at 18 years and 340 days as his side held on for a famous win.

## TURNING POINT

No 8 Viliami Ma'afu's disallowed try on half-time for a forward pass – the most marginal of calls. Georgia got the rub and Giorgi Tkhalashvili crashed over in the 56th minute to extend their 10-3 lead.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Captain Mamuka Gorgodze: "This is one of the greatest days in the history of Georgia rugby. We are a very small team. We've never had a win like this."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Captain Nili Latu: "The TMO is there and I think we could have more challenges. There are 32 cameras at these venues. I hope they are using them."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**TONGA** V Lilo; T Veainu, W Helu (S Piukala 52), S Piutau, F Vainikolo; K Morath, S Takulua; T Mailau (S Taumalolo 52), E Taione (P Ngauamo 52), H Aulika (S Puafisi 65), T Lokotui, S Mafi (H T-Pole 59), S Kalamafoni, N Latu (capt, J Ram 71), V Ma'afu.  
**Try:** Vainikolo. **Con:** Morath. **Pen:** Morath.

**GEORGIA** M Kvirikashvili; T Mchedlidze, D Kacharava, M Sharikadze, G Aptsiauri; L Malaguradze, V Lobzhanidze (G Begadze 78); M Nariashvili (K Asieshvili 60), J Bregvadze (S Mamukashvili 60), D Zirakashvili (L Chilachava 60), G Nemsadze, K Mikautadze (L Datunashvili 63), G Tkhalashvili (S Sutishvili 66), V Kolelishvili, M Gorgodze (capt).  
**Tries (2):** Gorgodze, Tkhalashvili.

**Cons:** Kvirikashvili 2. **Pen:** Kvirikashvili.

**Yellow card:** Kvirikashvili (73)

**REFEREE** Nigel Owens (Wales)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Mamuka Gorgodze

 <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	<b>26</b>
 <b>ARGENTINA</b>	<b>16</b>

Sunday 20 September, 4.45pm  
Wembley Att: 89,019

## IN THIS MATCH

The Kiwis, with a record 1,013 caps in the XV, only pulled away late on – it was the first time they were denied a bonus point in a pool game. Richie McCaw was binned for a trip – just his third card in 143 Tests.

## TURNING POINT

The second-half introduction of Sonny Bill Williams, who made 11 offloads in 34 minutes. Argentina's heroic defence wilted.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Steve Hansen: "There's no doubt



Post office Mamuka Gorgodze scores v Tonga

## POOL C FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	PTS
 <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	4	4	0	0	174	49	3	19
 <b>ARGENTINA</b>	4	3	0	1	179	70	3	15
 <b>GEORGIA</b>	4	2	0	2	53	123	0	8
 <b>TONGA</b>	4	1	0	3	70	130	2	6
 <b>NAMIBIA</b>	4	0	0	4	70	174	1	1

we were rusty. I've watched most games over the weekend and everyone has been probably half a tick off the pace."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Agustín Creevy: "We couldn't find a huge difference in the score. In the second half they were on top of us. They are the best in the world and play excellent rugby."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; N Milner-Skudder (B Barrett 49), C Smith, M Nonu (SB Williams 45), J Savea; D Carter, A Smith (TJ Perenara 68); T Woodcock (W Crockett 45), D Coles (K Mealamu 68), O Franks (C Faumuina 49), B Retallick (V Vito 70), S Whitelock, J Kaino (S Cane 64), R McCaw (capt), K Read.  
**Tries (2):** A Smith, Cane. **Cons:** Carter 2.

**Pens:** Carter 4.

**Yellow cards:** McCaw (30), C Smith (37)

**ARGENTINA** J Tuculet (L Amoroso 69); S Cordero, M Bosch, JM Hernández, J Imhoff; N Sánchez (J de la Fuente 69), T Cubelli (M Landajo 61); M Ayerza, A Creevy (capt, L Noguera Paz 69), N Tetaz Chaparro (R Herrera 54), G Petti (M Galarza 22), T Lavanini, P Matera (JM Leguizamón 58), JM Fernández Lobbe, L Senatore (J Montoya 64)  
**Try:** Petti. **Con:** Sánchez. **Pens:** Sánchez 3.

**Yellow card:** Matera (10)

**REFEREE** Wayne Barnes (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Brodie Retallick

## VITAL STATISTIC

54

The longest successful penalty (in metres) of the pool stage, slotted by Tonga's Kurt Morath

## Double time

Nehe Milner-Skudder got a brace v Namibia



 <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	<b>58</b>
 <b>NAMIBIA</b>	<b>14</b>

Thursday 24 September, 8pm  
Olympic Stadium Att: 51,820

## IN THIS MATCH

Braces by Nehe Milner-Skudder and Julian Savea helped the All Blacks to an error-strewn win. Namibia made thrice as many tackles (111 to 35) as NZ, who were led by Sam Cane – at 23 years 254 days his country's fifth youngest captain.

## TURNING POINT

NZ won the first of six scrum penalties in the third minute and from then on Namibia were generally on the back foot.

## WINNERS' PODIUM

Prop Charlie Faumuina: "We will take the win but it wasn't pretty out there for AB standard. We got too hungry sometimes."

## AND THE LOSERS...

Centre Johan Deyssel: "For the amount of players we have, we did quite well. They are not super beings but they are good."

## TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** C Slade (B Smith 51); N Milner-Skudder, M Fekitoa, SB Williams (M Nonu 62), J Savea; B Barrett, TJ Perenara (T Kerr-Barlow 48); B Franks, C Taylor, C Faumuina (W Crockett 64), L Romano, S Whitelock (K Read 58), J Kaino (R McCaw 62), S Cane (capt), V Vito.

**Tries (9):** Vito, Milner-Skudder 2, Fekitoa, Barrett, Savea 2, Smith, Taylor. **Cons:** Barrett 5. **Pen:** Barrett.

**NAMIBIA** J Tromp; D Philander (C Viviers 58-68), JC Greyling, J Deyssel, C Marais (C Botha 45);



T Kotze, E Jantjies (E Buitendag 73); J Engels, T van Jaarsveld (L van der Westhuizen 73), J Coetzee (R Larson 48, J Coetzee 60-69, 73), PJ van Lill (R Kitshoff 62), T Uanivi, J Burger (capt, J Venter 65), T du Plessis (L Damens 50-53), L Damens (R Bothma 45).

**Try:** Deysel. **Pens:** Kotze 3.

**Yellow card:** Engels (58)

**REFEREE** Romain Poite (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Nehe Milner-Skudder

## ARGENTINA GEORGIA

54  
9

Friday 25 September, 4.45pm  
Kingsholm Att: 14,256

### IN THIS MATCH

Argentina scored 40 unanswered points in the second half, having led just 14-9 at the break, and Nicolás Sánchez scored the first drop-goal of RWC 2015.

### TURNING POINT

Four minutes after the second half, Mamuka Gorgodze was sin-binned for a professional foul and while he was off the Pumas scored three tries in six minutes.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Agustín Creevy: "We kept the ball and were very dynamic. We had fun – that was the reason why we got so many points."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Milton Haig: "One week you celebrate and the next you get brought down to earth. They know they let themselves down in the second half."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ARGENTINA** J Tuculet; S Cordero, M Bosch, JM Hernández (J de la Fuente 36), J Imhoff; N Sánchez (L Amorosino 64), T Cubelli (M Landajo 57); M Ayerza (L Noguera Paz 67), A Creevy (capt, J Montoya 62), N Tetaz Chaparro (R Herrera 57), M Alemanno, T Lavanini, J Leguizamón

(P Matera 57), JM Fernández Lobbe (J Ortega Desio 64), F Isa.

**Tries (7):** Lavanini, Cubelli, Imhoff 2, Cordero 2, Landajo. **Cons:** Sánchez 3, Bosch 2. **Pens:** Sánchez 2. **DG:** Sánchez.

**GEORGIA** M Kvirikashvili (M Giorgadze 53); T Mchedlidze (G Pruidze 58), D Kacharava, M Sharikadze, G Aptisauri; L Malaguradze, V Lobzhanidze (G Begadze 57); M Nariashvili (K Asieshvili 51), J Bregvadze (S Mamukashvili 48), D Zirkashvili (L Chilachava 51), G Nemsadze, K Mikautadze (L Datunashvili 48), G Tkhlailashvili, V Koleishvili (S Sutiasvili 57), M Gorgodze (capt). **Pens:** Kvirikashvili 3.

**Yellow card:** Gorgodze (44)

**REFEREE** JP Doyle (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Santiago Cordero

## TONGA NAMIBIA

35  
21

Tuesday 29 September, 4.45pm  
Sandy Park Att: 10,103

### IN THIS MATCH

In a feast of running rugby, Tonga scored a record 35 points and five tries in a RWC game and Namibia got three for the first time. Namibia's Theuns Kotze (339) and Tonga's Kurt Morath (318) also broke their countries' points records.

### TURNING POINT

Jack Ram scored five minutes into the second half and although Namibia made a fight of it with two second-half tries, they couldn't get close enough to worry Tonga.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Captain Siale Piutau: "We will celebrate the victory tonight. The boys were hurting last week so we'll share a few beverages."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Namibia coach Phil Davies: "Tonga were just too good for us, though I got excited on a few occasions! We tried to play."



▲ **Truckin' Tongan**  
Opeti Fonua bowls over a Namibian defender

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**TONGA** V Lilo (V Helu 58); D Halaifonua, S Piutau (capt, K Morath 57), S Piukala, T Veainu; L Fosita, S Takulua (S Fisiiau 57); S Tonga'uiaha (T Mailau 58), A Lutui (P Ngauamo 46), S Puafisi (H Aulika 58), H T-Pole (L Lokotui 42), J Tuineau, S Kalamafoni (O Fonua 32), J Ram, V Ma'afu.

**Tries (5):** Veainu 2, Ram 2, Fosita. **Cons:** Lilo 2. **Pens:** Lilo, Morath.

**NAMIBIA** C Botha; J Tromp (D Philander 64), D van Wyk, J Deysel (D De La Harpe 70), R van Wyk; T Kotze, E Buitendag (D Stevens 71); C Viviers (J Redelinghuys ht), T van Jaarsveld (L van der Westhuizen 74), J Coetzee, J Venter (PJ van Lill ht), T Uanivi, J Burger (capt), R Kitshoff, R Bothma (T du Plessis 68).

**Tries (3):** Tromp, Burger 2. **Cons:** Kotze 3.

**REFEREE** Glen Jackson (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Jack Ram

## NEW ZEALAND GEORGIA

43  
10

Friday 2 October, 8pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 69,187

### IN THIS MATCH

NZ became the first team to reach the last eight after a ragged display featuring 16 turnovers. Waisake Naholo notched the fastest try of the pool stages (73 secs), and Georgia got their fastest-ever RWC try, Beka Tsiklauri scoring in the sixth minute.

### TURNING POINT

As soon as Waisake Naholo went over, you knew it would be a tough night for Georgia, 26 missed tackles not helping their cause as NZ made 732 metres to Georgia's 96.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

NZ centre Conrad Smith: "It's difficult in these games when you're expected to win easily and you have opposition doing their best to stop you. We didn't quite click."





## POOL C

### AND THE LOSERS...

Prop Anton Peikrishvili: "Everybody was working to not give up ground in defence. Even though it was hard and we were wounded, we were in it together."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; W Naholo (M Fekitoa 53), C Smith (SB Williams 63), SB Williams (V Vito 57), J Savea; D Carter, A Smith (T Kerr-Barlow 71); W Crockett (T Woodcock 61), D Coles (K Mealamu 71), C Faumuina (O Franks 61), B Retallick, S Whitelock, J Kaino, R McCaw (capt, S Cane 61), K Read.

**Tries (7):** Naholo, Savea 3, Coles, Read, Fekitoa.  
**Cons:** Carter 4.

**GEORGIA** B Tsiklauri; G Aptsiauri, D Kacharava, T Mchedlidze (M Giorgadze 76), A Todua (M Sharikadze 66); L Malaguradze, G Begadze (V Lobzhanidze 44); K Asieshvili (M Nariashvili 51), S Mamukashvili (S Maisuradze 66), L Chilachava (A Peikrishvili 51), G Chkhaidze, L Datunashvili, S Sutiashevili, M Gorgodze (capt, K Mikautadze 48), L Lomidze (V Koleishvili 68).

**Try:** Tsiklauri. **Con:** Malaguradze.

**Pen:** Malaguradze.

**REFEREE** Pascal Gauzère (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Mamuka Gorgodze

	<b>ARGENTINA</b>	<b>45</b>
	<b>TONGA</b>	<b>16</b>

Sunday 4 October, 2.30pm  
Leicester City Stadium Att: 29,124

### IN THIS MATCH

Argentina scored five tries in their biggest win over a Pacific Islands team, but there was nothing routine about this victory. Tonga slugged it out and prop Soane Tonga'uiaha scored a peach of a team try.

### TURNING POINT

This was always going to be fun when fans realised, before kick-off, that footballing legend Diego Maradona was in the crowd.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Agustín Creevy: "(Maradona) said the whole of Argentina was dreaming with us, everyone is behind us, supporting us. It was a beautiful surprise for all of us."



Jump to it Argentina and Tonga contest a lineout



**Hair flair**  
Ma'a Nonu gets his 30th NZ try in his 100th Test

### AND THE LOSERS...

Nili Latu: "We were in the game until the 68th minute but we let ourselves down with poor control and discipline."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ARGENTINA** J Tuculet; S Cordero, M Moroni (S González Iglesias 71), J de la Fuente, J Imhoff (H

Agulla 58); N Sánchez, M Landajo (T Cubelli 67); M Ayerza (L Noguera Paz 67), A Creevy (capt, J Montoya 67), R Herrera (JP Orlandi 67), G Petti (M Alemanno 66), T Lavanini, P Matera, JM Fernández Lobbe, L Senatore (F Isa 51).

**Tries (5):** Tuculet, Imhoff, Sánchez, Montoya, Cordero. **Cons:** Sánchez 4. **Pens:** Sánchez 4.

**TONGA** V Lilo (T Halaifonua 71); T Veainu, S Piutau, S Piukala (L Fosita 50), F Vainikolo; K Morath, S Takulua (S Fisiiau 71); S Tonga'uiaha (S Taumalola 61), E Taione (A Lutui 61), H'Aulika (S Puafisi 71), L Lokotui, J Tuineau (S Mafi 67), S Kalamafoni, N Latu (capt), V Ma'afu (O Fonua 62).

**Tries (2):** Morath, Tonga'uiaha. **Pens:** Morath 2.

**REFEREE** Jaco Peyper (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Nicolás Sánchez

	<b>NAMIBIA</b>	<b>16</b>
	<b>GEORGIA</b>	<b>17</b>

Wednesday 7 October, 8pm  
Sandy Park Att: 11,156

### IN THIS MATCH

Georgia withstood a late surge to win two games at a World Cup for the first time and qualify automatically for Japan 2019. And Namibia secured a first RWC bonus point in what was a marathon match – the first half lasted 64 minutes 49 seconds!

**Super fan**  
Diego Maradona was in Leicester







### TURNING POINT

Namibia's hopes were dented by the early concussion suffered by inspirational skipper Jacques Burger, who later retired from Test rugby. But Theuns Kotze's late try still made for a tense finish.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Centre Davit Kacharava: "It's a first for Georgia that we qualify for the next World Cup. Now we must build upon that."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Rohan Kitshoff: "The guys kept fighting to the end. The team is a team of character."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**NAMIBIA** C Botha; D Philander (J Coetzee 44-51), D van Wyk (H Smit 28), D De La Harpe (J Tromp 75), R van Wyk; T Kotze, E Jantjes (D Stevens 67); J Redelinghuys (J Engels 59), T van Jaarsveld (L van der Westhuizen 72), R Larson (J Coetzee 59), PJ van Lill, T Uanivi, J Burger (capt, R Kitshoff 10), T du Plessis (W Conradie 59), R Bothma.  
**Try:** Kotze. **Con:** Kotze. **Pens:** Kotze 3.  
**Yellow cards:** Larson (40+4), Coetzee (40+10), Bothma (50).  
**GEORGIA** M Kvirikashvili; T Mchedlidze (G Aptsiauri 43), D Kacharava, M Sharikadze, A Todua; L

Malaguradze, V Lobzhanidze (G Begadze 66); M Nariashvili (K Asieshvili 36), J Bregvadze (S Mamukashvili 57), D Zirakashvili, G Nemsadze, K Mikautadze (L Datunashvili 57), G Tkhalashvili, V Kolelishvili (L Lomidze ht), M Gorgodze (capt).  
**Tries (2):** Gordgodze, Malaguradze.

**Cons:** Kvirikashvili 2. **Pen:** Kvirikashvili.

**Yellow card:** Bregvadze (35)

**REFEREE** George Clancy (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Tinus du Plessis



**Strike back** Theuns Kotze goes over late on

	<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>TONGA</b>	<b>9</b>

Friday 9 October, 8pm  
St James' Park Att: 50,985

### IN THIS MATCH

A war dance-off, between the haka and Sipi Tau, set the tone. The ABs dropped a lot of passes in the first 40 but pulled away, Ma'a Nonu scoring a try in his 100th Test.

### TURNING POINT

The Kiwis should have conceded a penalty try late in the first half as their scrum fell to bits, but the decision didn't go Tonga's way and neither did the rest of the game.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Kieran Read: "Our work up front needs to improve. They put us under pressure."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Tonga coach Mana Otai: "We didn't get a reward for (our scrum)."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**NEW ZEALAND** B Smith; N Milner-Skudder, C Smith (S Williams 61), M Nonu, W Naholo (B Barrett 57); D Carter, A Smith (T Kerr-Barlow 72); T Woodcock (W Crockett 43), D Coles (K Mealamu 67), O Franks (B Franks 61), L Romano (B Retallick 51), S Whitelock (L Messam 66), J Kaino, S Cane, K Read (capt).  
**Tries (7):** B Smith, Woodcock, Milner-Skudder 2, Williams, Cane, Nonu. **Cons:** Carter 6.

**Yellow card:** Read (38)

**TONGA** V Lilo; T Veainu (W Helu 66), S Piutau, L Fosita, F Vainikolo; K Morath (V Tahitu'a 64), S Takulua (S Fisiiau 69); S Tonga'uia (S Taumalolo 55), E Taione (E Ngauamo 49), H 'Aulika (S Puafisa 70), L Lokotui, J Tuineau (S Mafi 54), S Kalamafoni, N Latu (capt), V Ma'afu (J Ram 66).  
**Pens:** Morath 3.

**Yellow card:** Ngauamo (70)

**REFEREE** John Lacey (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Nehe Milner-Skudder



**High rope** Renaldo Bothma was binned for this tackle

	<b>ARGENTINA</b>	<b>64</b>
	<b>NAMIBIA</b>	<b>19</b>

Sunday 11 October, noon  
Leicester City Stadium Att: 30,198

### IN THIS MATCH

This 83-point romp was the highest-scoring game of RWC 2015. Namibia prop Johnny Redelinghuys took the final kick – for more on that moment to cherish, see page 128.

### TURNING POINT

The two tries in the last five minutes of the first half, from Facundo Isa and Lucas Noguera, gave Argentina a 36-7 lead at the break and killed off the game.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Daniel Hourcade: "The team has the weapons needed for each situation. Sometimes you need an open game, sometimes a more closed type of game."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Namibia wing Johan Tromp: "We fell one try short of what we wanted to achieve. We wanted the bonus-point try."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ARGENTINA** L Amorosino; M Moroni, S González Iglesias (J Imhoff 64), JP Socino, H Agulla; JM Hernández (M Bosch 50), M Landajo (capt, T Cubelli 52); L Noguera, J Montoya (A Creevy 69), JP Orlandi (R Herrera 52), G Petti, M Alemanno (JM Fernández Lobbe 60), P Matera (L Senatore 49), J Ortega Desio, F Isa.

**Tries (9):** Hernández, Moroni, Agulla, Isa, Noguera, Alemanno, Senatore, Montoya, Cubelli.  
**Cons:** González Iglesias 4, Socino 4.

**Pen:** González Iglesias.

**Yellow card:** Bosch (53)

**NAMIBIA** C Botha (R van Wyk 57); J Tromp, JC Greyling (H Smit 64-70), J Deyssel, C Marais; T Kotze, D Stevens (E Jantjes 64); J Engels (J Redelinghuys 51), T van Jaarsveld (L van der Westhuizen 51), J Coetzee (A de Klerk 46), J Venter (PJ van Lill 5), T Uanivi, R Kitshoff (capt), W Conradie, L Damens (T du Plessis 57).  
**Tries (3):** Tromp, Greyling, Jantjes. **Cons:** Kotze 2.

**Yellow cards:** Greyling (11), Du Plessis (76)

**REFEREE** Pascal Gauzère (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH:** Horacio Agulla

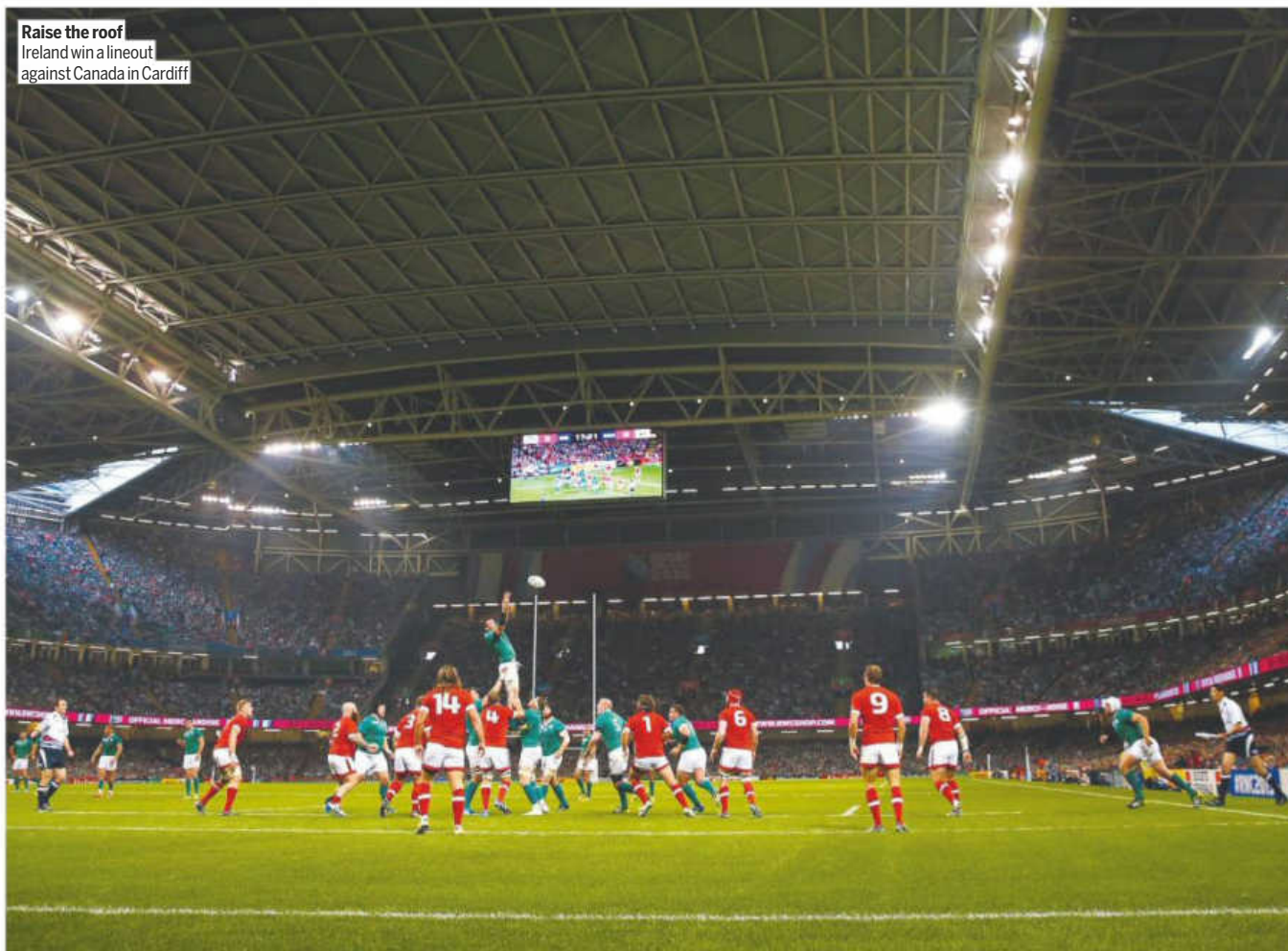
**Rock 'n' roll** Namibia set a maul against Argentina





## POOL D

**Raise the roof**  
Ireland win a lineout  
against Canada in Cardiff



**IRELAND**  
**CANADA**

**50**  
**7**

Saturday 19 September, 2.30pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 68,523

### IN THIS MATCH

Paul O'Connell became only the second Irishman to play in four World Cups, after Brian O'Driscoll, in a comfortable win.

### TURNING POINT

It was 3-0 when Jamie Cudmore was sent to the bin after 17 minutes and 22-0 when he returned, Ireland running in three tries.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Jamie Heaslip: "It was a hard game with a lot of pace, and it was very physical."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Kieran Crowley: "We conceded 19 points when a man down and when they were down to 14 we failed to score. We've got to take our chances in the red zone."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**IRELAND** R Kearney (S Zebo 74); D Kearney J Payne, L Fitzgerald, K Earls; J Sexton (I Madigan 55), C Murray (E Reddan 65); J McGrath (C Healy 61), R Best (S Cronin 61), M Ross (N White 61),

I Henderson, P O'Connell (capt, D Ryan 74), P O'Mahony, S O'Brien (C Henry 63), J Heaslip.  
**Tries (7):** O'Brien, Henderson, Sexton, D Kearney, Cronin, R Kearney, Payne. **Cons:** Sexton 3, Madigan 3. **Pen:** Sexton.

**Yellow card:** O'Connell (42)

**CANADA** M Evans (L Underwood ht, R Thorpe 75); J Hassler (C Trainor ht), C Hearn, N Blevins, DTH van der Merwe; N Hirayama, G McRorie (P Mack 48); H Buydens (D Sears-Duru 48), R Barkwill (B Piffaro 63), D Wooldridge (A Tiedemann 66), B Beukeboom, J Cudmore (capt), K Gilmour (J Sinclair 48), J Moonlight, A Carpenter.

**Try:** Van der Merwe. **Con:** Hirayama.

**Yellow card:** Cudmore (17)

**REFEREE** Glen Jackson (New Zealand)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Johnny Sexton

**FRANCE**  
**ITALY**

**32**  
**10**

Saturday 19 September, 8pm  
Twickenham Att: 76,232

### IN THIS MATCH

Two props scored their first France tries, Rabah Slimani in his 18th Test and Nicolas Mas in his 81st! The game was blighted by injuries to Andrea Masi and Yoann Huget.

### TURNING POINT

In a fractured match of 37 penalties, any hopes of an Italy comeback were dashed

soon after the break when Slimani scored from Freddie Michalak's deft grubber kick.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Freddie Michalak: "I think I was the only one who believed I could be here (at the RWC), only me and my wife and family, and sometimes even they had doubts."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Jacques Brunel: "We didn't really understand the referee and his decisions led to the imbalance of the game."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**FRANCE** S Spedding; Y Huget (G Fickou 55), M Bastareaud, A Dumoulin, N Nakaitaci; F Michalak (R Talès 76), S Tillous-Borde (M Parra 57); E Ben Arous (V Debaty 61), G Guirado (B Kayser 61-66, 74), R Slimani (N Mas 63), P Papé, Y Maestri (A Flanquart 69), T Dusautoir (capt), D Chouly, L Picamoles (B le Roux 66).

**Tries (2):** Mas, Slimani. **Cons:** Michalak 2.

**Pens:** Michalak 5, Spedding.

**ITALY** L McLean; L Sarto, M Campagnaro, A Masi (E Bacchin 11), G Venditti; T Allan (C Canna 79), E Gori (G Palazzani 72); M Agüero (M Rizzo 50), L Ghiraldini (capt, A Manici 63), M Castrogiovanni (L Cittadini 50), Q Geldenhuys, J Furno (V Bernabò 72), A Zanni, F Minto (S Favaro 61), S Vunisa.

**Try:** Venditti. **Con:** Allan. **Pen:** Allan.

**REFEREE** Craig Joubert (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Louis Picamoles

▼ **Speed bump**  
Mathieu Bastareaud  
gets going v Italy





## FRANCE 38 ROMANIA 11

Wednesday 23 September, 8pm  
Olympic Stadium Att: 50,626

### IN THIS MATCH

Dan Dumbrava, Ovidiu Tonita and Paulica Ion all equalled Romeo Gontineac's Romania record of playing at four World Cups. France overran the Oaks, who did score their first RWC try against France.

### TURNING POINT

Paulica Ion was yellow-carded for pulling down a maul after half an hour and France profited, Sofiane Guitoune and Yannick Nyanga scoring tries in his absence.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Bernard Le Roux: "Physically Romania were on form. They were really strong in defence."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Forwards coach Marius Tincu: "The team celebrated the try like a victory. We've shown we can compete with big nations."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**FRANCE** B Dulin; S Guitoune, G Fickou, W Fofana, N Nakaitaci; R Talès, M Parra (R Kockott 67); V Debaty (E Ben Arous 68), D Szarzewski (capt, B Kayser 22-32, 50) U Atonio (N Mas 50), B le Roux, A Flanquart, Y Nyanga, F Ouedraogo, L Picamoles (D Chouly 50).

**Tries (5):** Nyanga, Fofana, Fickou, Guitoune 2.

**Cons:** Parra 3, Kockott 2. **Pen:** Parra.

**ROMANIA** C Fercu; M Lemnaru, P Kinikinilau, F Vlaicu, A Apostol (I Botezatu 78); D Dumbrava (C Gal 47), F Surugiu (V Calafeteanu 75); M Lazar (A Ursache 72), O Turashvili (A Radoi 59), P Ion (H Pungea 80), V Poparlan (O Tonita 71), J van Heerden, V Ursache (H Pungea 36-40, 73), V Lucaci (S Burcea 79), M Macovei (capt).

**Try:** Ursache. **Pens:** Vlaicu 2.

**Yellow card:** Ion (30)

**REFEREE** Jaco Peyper (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Wesley Fofana

## ITALY 23 CANADA 18

Saturday 26 September, 2.30pm  
Elland Road Att: 33,120

### IN THIS MATCH

Mauro Bergamasco equalled Brian Lima's record of playing in five World Cups as Italy – at times run ragged by Canada – recovered from a 10-0 deficit to win.

### TURNING POINT

Phil Mackenzie crossed in the 47th minute for what looked like a second Canada try in three minutes, but it was ruled out for a forward pass. Italy weathered the storm.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Mauro Bergamasco: "Winning is what we wanted to do, but we weren't happy with how we played. We didn't defend well."

## POOL D FINAL STANDINGS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	BP	PTS
IRELAND	4	4	0	0	134	35	2	18
FRANCE	4	3	0	1	120	63	2	14
ITALY	4	2	0	2	74	88	2	10
ROMANIA	4	1	0	3	60	129	0	4
CANADA	4	0	0	4	58	131	2	2

### AND THE LOSERS...

Lock Jamie Cudmore: "The forward pass – for the good of rugby they could have let it go. We were the better team and we've shown we can play with the big boys."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ITALY** L McLean; L Sarto, T Benvenuti (M Campagnaro 59), G Garcia (G Palazzani 72), G Venditti; T Allan (C Canna 32-39), E Gori; M Rizzo (M Aguerro 46), L Ghiraldini (capt, D Giazzone 59), L Cittadini (M Castrogiovanni 46), Q Geldenhuys (M Fuser 79), J Furno, A Zanni, F Minto, S Vunisa (M Bergamasco 58).

**Tries (2):** Rizzo, Garcia. **Cons:** Allan 2. **Pens:** Allan 3.

**CANADA** M Evans; P Mackenzie, C Hearn, C Braid (C Trainor 14), DTH van der Merwe; N Hirayama (H Jones 73), J Mackenzie (P Mack 55); H Buydens (D Sears-Duru 55), R Barkwill (A Carpenter 58), D Wooldridge (A Tiedemann 65), J Sinclair, J Cudmore (E Olmstead 72), N Dala (K Gilmour 59), J Moonlight, T Ardron (capt).

**Tries (2):** Van der Merwe, Evans. **Con:** Hirayama.

**Pens:** Hirayama 2.

**REFEREE** George Clancy (Ireland)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** DTH van der Merwe

## IRELAND 44 ROMANIA 10

Sunday 27 September, 4.45pm  
Wembley Att: 89,267

### IN THIS MATCH

Tommy Bowe overtook Denis Hickie as Ireland's second-highest try-scorer, on 30, as Ireland sparked into life in front of a record RWC crowd – the previous highest attendance was 82,957 for the 2003 final.

### TURNING POINT

It was one-way traffic, but Ovidiu Tonita – playing in his 14th RWC game to equal Romeo Gontineac's record – got a late try.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Jamie Heaslip: "It was a tide of green today, which was pretty empowering."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Ovidiu Tonita: "The goal for this World Cup is to give a good image of Romanian rugby. We played well against Ireland and France, but the scores didn't reflect that."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**IRELAND** S Zebo; T Bowe, J Payne (P Jackson 57), D Cave, K Earls (R Kearney 48-55, 63, C Murray 70); I Madigan, E Reddan; C Healy (J McGrath

### VITAL STATISTIC

# 148

Ireland's average carries. They passed 201 times a match too – both pool stage highs

53), R Strauss (S Cronin 59), N White (T Furlong 63), D Ryan (P O'Connell 63), D Toner, J Murphy, C Henry, J Heaslip (capt, S O'Brien 59).  
**Tries (6):** Bowe 2, Earls 2, Kearney, Henry.  
**Cons:** Madigan 4. **Pens:** Madigan 2.

**ROMANIA** C Fercu; A Apostol (F Ionita 53), P Kinikinilau, C Gal, I Botezatu; M Wiringi (F Vlaicu 67), V Calafeteanu (F Surugiu 67); A Ursache (M Lazar 67), A Radoi (O Turashvili 55), P Ion (A Tarus 53), V Poparlan, O Tonita, V Lucaci (J van Heerden 67), M Macovei (capt, S Burcea 59), D Carpo.  
**Try:** Tonita. **Con:** Vlaicu. **Pen:** Calafeteanu.

**Yellow card:** Gal (61)

**REFEREE** Craig Joubert (South Africa)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Keith Earls

## FRANCE 41 CANADA 18

Thursday 1 October, 8pm  
Stadium MK Att: 28,145

### IN THIS MATCH

France pulled clear in the last 15 minutes as Freddie Michalak became his country's record World Cup point-scorer with 136, overtaking Thierry Lacroix's mark of 124.

### TURNING POINT

With Canada just nine points behind with 13 minutes to go, Pascal Papé rumbled over to put daylight between the teams.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Try-scorer Remi Grosso: "It's a great moment for me, but, more importantly, the team got the win and bonus point."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Team manager Gareth Rees: "After that performance, Canada deserve to play more Tier One nations. Canada are back."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**FRANCE** S Spedding; R Grosso, M Bastareaud (A Dumoulin 69), W Fofana, B Dulin; F Michalak (R Talès 67), S Tiliou-Borde (M Parra 58); E Ben

**Red alert** DTH van der Merwe runs in an early try against France





# POOL D

Arous (V Debaty 58), G Guirado (B Kayser), R Slimani (N Mas 62); P Papé, Y Maestri; T Dusauroir (capt), B le Roux (Y Nyanga 67), D Chouly (F Ouedraogo 72).

**Tries (5):** Papé, Guirado, Fofana, Slimani, Grosso.

**Cons:** Michalak (4), Parra. **Pens:** Michalak (2).

**CANADA** M Evans (H Jones 36, C Trainor 63); P Mackenzie (H Jones 68), C Hearn, N Blevins, DTH van der Merwe; N Hirayama, P Mack (G McRorie 67); H Buydens (D Sears-Duru 47), A Carpenter (E Olmstead 61), D Wooldridge (A Tiedemann 68); B Beukeboom, J Cudmore; K Gilmour, R Thorpe (R Barkwill 47), T Ardron (capt, N Dala 18).

**Tries (2):** Carpenter, van der Merwe.

**Con:** Hirayama. **Pens:** Hirayama (2).

**Yellow card:** Dala (72)

**REFEREE** JP Doyle (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Freddie Michalak

## IRELAND ITALY

16  
9

Sunday 4 October, 4.45pm  
Olympic Stadium Att: 53,187

### IN THIS MATCH

Ireland secured a quarter-final place with a nervy win over Italy, who fielded Sergio



Irish flyer  
Simon Zebo

Parisse for the first time at this RWC after his surgery on a calf haematoma. Keith Earls became Ireland's top RWC try-scorer with eight, passing Brian O'Driscoll.

### TURNING POINT

Peter O'Mahony's last-ditch tackle on Josh Furno stopped Italy going ahead on 48 minutes – one of the few scoring opportunities in a scrappy encounter.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Johnny Sexton: "They were always going to be at their best with Parisse back because of his leadership. We won ugly."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Sergio Parisse: "The world expected Ireland to roll over us and win by 50 points, but the team answered in a positive way."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**IRELAND** S Zebo; T Bowe, K Earls (L Fitzgerald 76), R Henshaw, D Kearney; J Sexton, C Murray; J McGrath (C Healy 59), R Best (S Cronin 70), M Ross (N White 59), I Henderson (D Toner 67), P O'Connell (capt), P O'Mahony, S O'Brien (C Henry 67), J Heaslip.

**Try:** Earls. **Con:** Sexton. **Pens:** Sexton 3.

**Yellow card:** O'Mahony (72)

**ITALY** L McLean; L Sarto, M Campagnaro, G Garcia (T Benvenuti 3), G Venditti; T Allan (C Canna 65), E Gori (G Palazzani 76); M Agüero (M Rizzo 62-73), A Manici (D Giazzone ht), L Cittadini (D Chistolini



**Strong as Oaks**  
Romania celebrate their comeback win

62), Q Geldenhuys, J Furno, F Minto, S Favaro (M Bergamasco 67), S Parisse (capt, A Zanni 65). **Pens:** Allan 3.

**REFEREE** Jérôme Garcès (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Iain Henderson

## CANADA ROMANIA

15  
17

Tuesday 6 October, 4.45pm  
Leicester City Stadium Att: 27,153

### IN THIS MATCH

Romania came from 15-0 down to win via a Florin Vlaicu penalty – the RWC's biggest comeback. DTH van der Merwe became the first player from a Tier Two nation to score a try in four straight RWC games.

### TURNING POINT

Nathan Hirayama's missed penalty on the hour gave Romania the impetus to pile on the pressure. Canada had the lowest kick success in the tournament – 53%.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Coach Lynn Howells: "Canada's wide game fell apart in the last 20 and gave us an opportunity to play the way we wanted."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Kieran Crowley: "We did some pretty naïve things in the last 15 minutes."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**CANADA** H Jones (J Pritchard 75); J Hassler, C Hearn, N Blevins (C Trainor 49), DTH van der Merwe; N Hirayama, G McRorie (P Mack 49); H Buydens (D Sears-Duru 45-54, 61), R Barkwill, D Wooldridge (J Ilnicki 67), B Beukeboom, J Cudmore (capt), J Sinclair, J Moonlight (N Dala 62), A Carpenter.

**Tries (2):** Van der Merwe, Hassler.

**Con:** Hirayama. **Pen:** McRorie.

**Yellow card:** Sinclair (71)

**ROMANIA** C Fercu; M Lemnaru, P Kinikini, F Vlaicu, I Botezatu; M Wiringi (C Gal 51), F Surugiu (V Calafeteanu 21); M Lazar (A Tarus 74), O Turashvili (A Radoi 65), P Ion (A Ursache 45), V Poparlan, J van Heerden, V Ursache, V Lucaci (D Carpo 76), M Macovei (capt).

**Tries (2):** Macovei 2. **Cons:** Vlaicu 2. **Pen:** Vlaicu.

**Yellow card:** Fercu (18)

**REFEREE** Wayne Barnes (England)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Jeff Hassler

## ITALY ROMANIA

32  
22

Sunday 11 October, 2.30pm  
Sandy Park Att: 11,450

### IN THIS MATCH

Italy clinched third spot in the pool to book their place at Japan 2019, racing into a 22-3 lead with three first-half tries. But the Oaks hit back with three tries of their own.

### TURNING POINT

While Johannes van Heerden was binned for a trip early on, Italy scored ten points.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Tommaso Allan: "We attacked with a lot of enthusiasm, but we fell asleep for the last 15 minutes and let Romania in."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Coach Lynn Howells: "We had a chance to beat a Tier One nation and didn't take it."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**ITALY** L McLean (G Palazzani 60); L Sarto, M Campagnaro (E Bacchin 33), T Benvenuti, G Venditti; T Allan, E Gori (C Canna 68); M Agüero (A de Marchi 56), A Manici (D Giazzone 56), L Cittadini (D Chistolini 56), Q Geldenhuys (capt), J Furno (V Bernabò 75), F Minto, S Favaro (S Vunisa 64), A Zanni.

**Tries (4):** Sarto, Gori, Allan, Zanni. **Cons:** Allan 3.

**Pens:** Allan 2.

**ROMANIA** C Fercu; M Lemnaru, P Kinikini, F Vlaicu, I Botezatu (A Apostol 64); M Wiringi (C Gal ht), V Calafeteanu (T Bratu 60); M Lazar (H Pungea



**Bonus time**  
Alessandro Zanni scores





**All fall down**  
A scrum collapses  
during Italy v Romania

66), O Turashvili (A Radoi 58), P Ion (A Ursache ht), V Poparlan, J van Heerden (M Antonescu 55), V Ursache (capt, S Burcea 48), V Lucaci (V Ursache 56), D Carpo.

**Tries (3):** Apostol 2, Poparlan. **Cons:** Vlaicu 2. **Pen:** Vlaicu.

**Yellow card:** Van Heerden (16)

**REFEREE** Romain Poite (France)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Edoardo Gori



**Sad ending**  
Paul O'Connell's Test days ended with injury

 <b>FRANCE</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>IRELAND</b>	<b>24</b>

Sunday 11 October, 4.45pm  
Millennium Stadium Att: 72,163

### IN THIS MATCH

Ireland lost Johnny Sexton, Paul O'Connell and Peter O'Mahony to injury by the 55th minute, but still won by 15 points – their biggest winning margin against France for 40 years – to secure top spot in Pool D.

### TURNING POINT

France had a good chance from a 22m lineout when trailing by eight, but the ball was turned over and the danger cleared.

### WINNERS' PODIUM

Jamie Heaslip: "I've played in some massive games, but that atmosphere surpassed anything I've ever played in."

### AND THE LOSERS...

Bernard Le Roux: "For them to lose leaders we hoped we'd go better in the second half. But they started running everything."

### TEAM LINE-UPS

**FRANCE** S Spedding; N Nakaitaci, M Bastareaud (A Dumoulin 62), W Fofana, B Dulin; F Michalak (R Talès 55), S Tillous-Borde (M Parra 55); E Ben Arous (V Debaty 43-48, 65), G Guirado (B Kayser 59), R Slimani (N Mas 63), P Papé (A Flanquart 74), Y Maestri, T Dusautier (capt), D Chouly (B le Roux 55), L Picamoles.

**Pens:** Spedding 2, Parra.

**IRELAND** R Kearney; T Bowe, K Earls (L Fitzgerald 62), R Henshaw, D Kearney; J Sexton (I Madigan 25), C Murray (E Reddan 77); C Healy (J McGrath 57), R Best (R Strauss 74), M Ross (N White 65), D Toner, P O'Connell (capt, I Henderson ht), P O'Mahony (C Henry 55), S O'Brien, J Heaslip.

**Tries (2):** R Kearney, Murray. **Con:** Madigan.

**Pens:** Sexton 2, Madigan 2.

**REFEREE** Nigel Owens (Wales)

**MAN OF THE MATCH** Sean O'Brien

**Up for grabs**  
Noa Nakaitaci, Dave Kearney and Morgan Parra all go for the ball





# TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT

Our Opta stats-based XV features ten nationalities and threats all over...



## RUGBY WORLD CUP STATS

TOP TRY-SCORERS		TOP POINT-SCORERS		MOST TACKLES		MOST METRES MADE	
8	Julian Savea (NZ)	6	Nehe M-Skudder (NZ)	97	Nicolás Sánchez (Arg)	93	Handre Pollard (SA)
77	Francois Louw (SA)	77	Lood de Jager (SA)	561	Nehe M-Skudder (NZ)	526	Ben Smith (NZ)
MOST CARRIES		MOST LINEOUT WINS		MOST OFFLOADS		MOST DEFENDERS BEATEN	
96	Schalk Burger (SA)	75	Ben Smith (NZ)	32	Lood de Jager (SA)	28	Kieran Read (NZ)
16	Sonny Bill Williams (NZ)	11	Leone Nakawara (Fiji)	31	Santiago Cordero (Arg)	29	Drew Mitchell (Aus)
MOST LINE BREAKS		MOST TURNOVERS		MOST TRY ASSISTS			
15	Nehe M-Skudder (NZ)	13	Santiago Cordero (Arg)	13	Ben Smith (NZ)	17	David Pocock (Aus)
13	Francois Louw (SA)	6	Fourie du Preez (SA)	5	Greig Laidlaw (Scot)	5	Dan Carter (NZ)

**0** UR TEAM could easily have been crammed with All Blacks but we've settled on five, leaving room for such stars as DTH van der Merwe (five turnovers to go with his average of one try and 97 metres a game), Richie Gray (55 tackles, 19 lineouts and seven restart takes) and Michael Leitch (whose carries average of 15 exceeded even Schalk Burger).

Sonny Bill Williams was mainly used off the bench but his offloading impact demanded inclusion, while Dane Coles beats Agustín Creevy to the hooker spot by virtue of a 97% throw success in the lineout (60 out of 62) and four turnovers.

Dan Carter, magnificent in the knockout stage when he dropped two vital goals, edges Nicolás Sánchez at No 10.

Scott Sio (40 tackles) was intrinsic to a Wallaby pack that won 13 scrum penalties whilst Frans Malherbe (50 tackles, 3m a carry) was the cornerstone of a strong Springbok eight. The phenomenal David Pocock (17 turnovers) reverts to openside.

Gareth Davies's five tries help him nick the No 9 shirt from Fourie du Preez, who joins Lood de Jager, Francois Louw, Santiago Cordero, Taulupe Faletau and top try-scorer Julian Savea in being unlucky to miss out. First name on the sheet? Leone Nakawara. Nine turnovers, 26 lineouts, 11 offloads – sensational!



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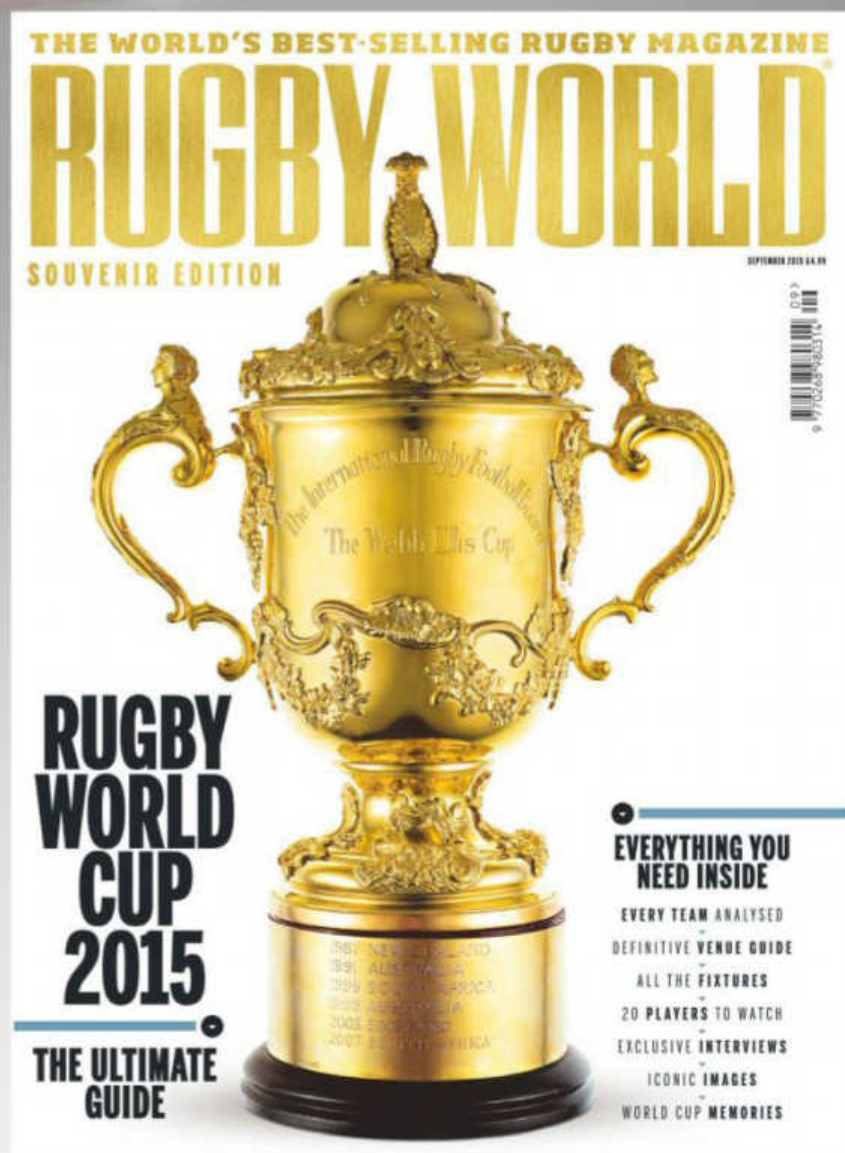








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## Panto season

The use/lack of use of the TMO at the World Cup caused emotions to run high on a number of occasions. Captains regularly looked to the assistant referees or ludicrously mimed the TMO symbol at any perceived infringement.

Perhaps World Rugby needs to look at tennis and cricket and allow teams a number of challenges, so stopping the pantomime arm-waving at source.

**Jamie Campbell-Baldwin**  
*HMS Collingwood*



▲ **Screen test** Officials Doyle and Barnes await a TMO decision

## TMO confusion

When Craig Joubert awarded *that* penalty for Australia against Scotland, World Rugby said he couldn't have asked for the TMO's assistance as they can only adjudicate on foul play or a kick at goal.

Yet throughout the tournament, whenever a stand-off opted for a high cross-field kick the referee inevitably asked to check if the chasing wing had been ahead of the kicker and thus offside. I'm confused.

**Iain L MacLeod, Isle of Bute**  
**RW says:** The technology can be used for the act of

## STAR LETTER

### England 2015 was truly a world in union

As the recriminations began after England's exit, we considered how best to put our sadness to one side and still enjoy the World Cup. The loss to Australia didn't deter us from attending the next day's Ireland-Italy game at the Olympic Stadium.

The Fisher family, father, son and grandson alongside father-in-law, wore England shirts, with the flag of St George as capes, Roman helmets and a sign 'SPQR, the Lost Legion of Britannicus'. Our small legion had a fabulous day interacting with a multitude of international fans, the banter was sharp and funny, and we were stopped and photographed so many times we discussed a charging system!

The amount of people who shook our hands was amazing: Australians commiserated with us, Welshmen suggested changes, Irishmen enjoyed our pain but offered counselling, the Italians were flamboyant as always. The wheels may have fallen off our chariot but, with support from the rugby community, that Sunday restored our faith in the beautiful game. It was a World Cup to treasure.

**Andy Fisher, from Bexley, London**

**RW says:** Spot on Andy, it certainly felt like the best World Cup ever to us.



▲ **Honorary Romans** Andy (second right) with the Fisher clan at Stratford, where rugby's spirit shone through



▲ **Sit down!** Does the Mexican Wave show a lack of respect to the teams?

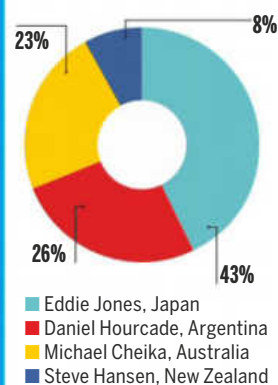
scoring a try, a kick at goal or foul play, so using it to check for offside from a cross-kick is only allowed if a try results from the move.

## Rogue wave

Now that the World Cup is over, I only hope the craze of the Mexican Wave has retired and that supporters can actually watch the match and not each other. How rude is that? Sorry

## THE RW POLL

Which head coach stood out from the rest at RWC 2015? Here's your verdict...



teams, but you aren't entertaining enough! Let's put a stop to this practice now. As Nigel Owens would say, this isn't soccer!

**Tony Fardy**  
*Waterlooville, Hampshire*

## It wasn't Sam's fault

The criticism aimed at England's selection against Wales, and particularly at Sam Burgess, was ridiculous and infantile. Burgess didn't ask to be selected, he simply trained like everyone else and was deemed worthy of his place. Remember that with him on the field, England were winning the match by ten points at one stage!

What lost England the match wasn't selection, Burgess or the late lineout call, it was the inability to close out a game which they had a stranglehold on. Rugby has 'captains' in key positions but England



# INTOUCH

➔ left Chris Robshaw to shoulder everything.

**Keith Warhurst**

**Stockport, Cheshire**

**RW says:** No one's blaming Burgess for being selected, just those who picked him. See our report card, P78.

## Going Stateside

How about putting the USA and Canada in the Six Nations? There are nearly half a million rugby players in the USA, and placing them in an Eight Nations would immediately awaken the USA sleeping giant. Imagine 80,000 fans at a big stadium in New York or LA, watching Scotland, Ireland, England or Wales.

I don't advocate relegation

and promotion to and from the Six Nations, which would kill rugby in Scotland and Italy. Just that we expand the Six Nations where it makes commercial sense.

**Rory Smith**

**Conwy, North Wales**

**RW says:** Georgia and Romania, who won more games than Canada and USA at the RWC, would be right to take issue with you.

## Double standards

What a fantastic World Cup. On the pitch the Tier Two sides are closing the gap, but why can't this be so off it? Too often they had players cited and banned for actions replicated by the big boys



▲ **Rough justice** Uruguay were one Tier Two side hindered by the schedule



▲ **Blunt** England lacked creativity at the World Cup, says one reader

– who went unpunished. With the scheduling again doing Tier Two nations no favours, it's a wonder they bother flying over at all.

**Damo Williams**

**Whitminster, Glos**

## Where's the spark?

With the demise of English rugby, who do we blame? So many creative players have been driven from the game because they don't meet the physical mould of a rugby player. England are built to play to a pattern. A team built on structure and statistics, not heart, passion or courage.

**Jacob Edwards**

**Coventry, West Midlands**

**RW says:** You're on thin ice to say England lack heart. But what do other readers think about the creativity?

## Checked mate

Rhys Warwick, of Redingsians Rams RFC, was thrilled to bump into Scott Quinnell at the RWC



## CALLING RUGBY FANS!

**Got an interesting pic?** Send it to [rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com) and you could see it here!

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▲ **Where Eagles dare** Chris Wyles scores for USA at the RWC – but should they be embraced by the Six Nations?

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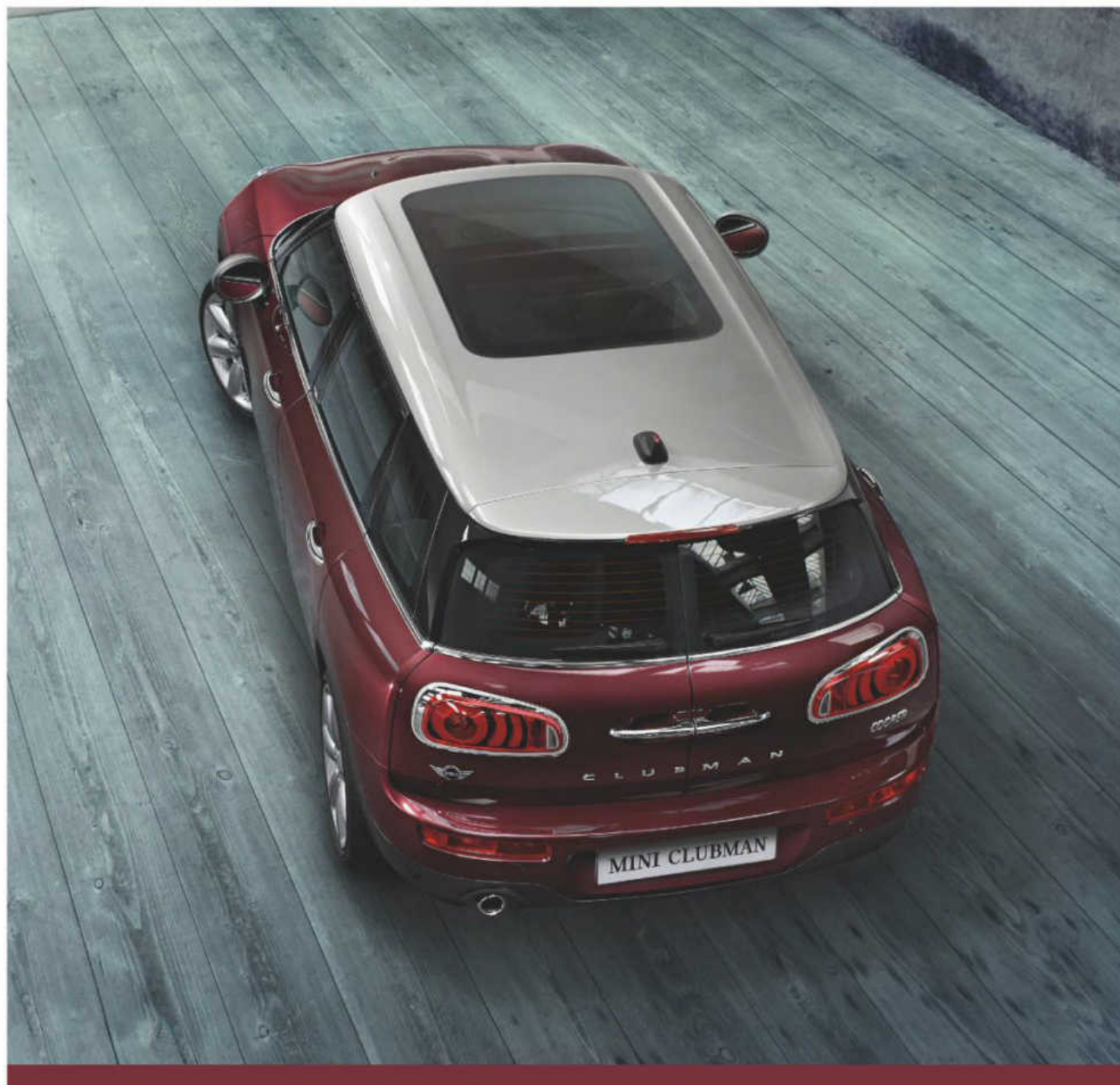
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# MA'AS BAR

**Ma'a Nonu**, a two-time World Cup winner and departing All Black, explains how special this team really is

**I** HAVE a similar feeling to 2011. But up until the week of this final, we just had the focus of really putting

everything out there on the pitch. Especially in terms of what happens afterwards, with players leaving – we didn't want that to get in the way.

Our main motivation was to play for each other. Winning has its personal meaning and I just want to thank my family for being the cornerstone of my career. Big ups to the boys, the likes of Richie McCaw and Dan Carter and especially my midfield partner Conrad Smith.

Conrad and I have played a lot together (the final was their 62nd Test start together, a world record) and we may not play together again, though we may see each other again in the Top 14 as I'm contracted to Toulon and Conrad to Pau.

The final was an 80-minute game really and kicked off to a good start. Discipline played its role in terms of being down to 14 men and that's how the Australians play – they never lie down, never quit. They came back and scored two good tries to put us against the wall and we had to climb back in. I guess in the first half we

just wanted to be direct, to look after the pill. I felt they defended well in the first 20 minutes, we couldn't get over the line and they turned us over a couple of times.

It was pretty tough being a player down in the final and it surprised us in terms of the back-field. They made the most of that and skinned us on the outside a few times. We just had to work hard. That's what Australia

**"WHEN IT CAME TO THE CRUNCH WE HAD TO PLAY OUR BEST RUGBY"**

do and we just had to hold on until Bender (Ben Smith) got back on.

They scored a try off a lineout drive, and we made a few errors in terms of decision-making. We just kicked it down field and you can't kick it to Izzy Folau or Kurtley Beale like that. They put in a good kick through and Bernard Foley got to it to lay on another try, for Tevita Kuridrani.

With his drop-goal, I'd back DC (Carter) any day! It was just a matter



▲ **Shake a leg**  
Dancing in the changing room

of him backing himself. He thrived in the last three weeks of the tournament. He wanted a good World Cup and he did that. I've seen him play like that before but I think it was extra special for Dan in terms of him playing in a World Cup final. In the past two World Cups he was injured, so he kicked into another gear in the last three weeks. We saw the best No 10 for New Zealand.

And it was a great ball by Sonny Bill Williams for my try. Sonny is probably the best offloader in the game at the moment. But I was surprised to get through all the way to score.

It was all pretty special, with the big



**Departing heroes**  
Carter, McCaw and Nonu




task of trying to win it back-to-back and to do that out of the country. We hit good patches in the pool stages but when it came to the crunch we had to play our best rugby. The win in



2011 is just a memory now but this one will stick out. The boys stuck together in the 48 hours after the final as they knew it could be the last time this team would be together.

I probably couldn't put it into words how special this group was. I was asked after the final how much I'll miss wearing the All Black jersey but you can't answer that when you're still in the environment. Maybe in six months' time if you see me walking down the street you can ask me, but at the moment I want to enjoy this.

● Was this New Zealand team the best ever? Email your views to [rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com) 

## RANDOMSTATS

### The BREAKDOWN

4897

The number of miles between **Galway** and **Krasnoyarsk**, the distance **Connacht** have to travel for their opening Challenge Cup game v Enisei-STM



14

The number of weeks' wages **Matt Giteau** and **Drew Mitchell** sacrificed from their Toulon deals to play at RWC 2015 for Australia

3

The number of times the Webb Ellis Cup has been presented to the champions by a member of the Royal Family, **the Queen** in 1991 and 1999 and **Prince Harry** this year

1.9%

The increase in **retail sales** in September, the World Cup effect seeing their fastest monthly improvement rate since Dec 2013

32

The consecutive Tests in which **Fiji** have got a try, the longest run by any national team

8

The number of drop-goals scored at **RWC 2015**, the fewest at any RWC. The previous lowest total was 14 in 2007



The number of tries **Julian Savea** has scored v **South Africa**, the only country he's played that he's failed to score against



## CANADA FULL-BACK MATT EVANS

# "I went head-first through some solid boards"



PIGS: GETTY IMAGES

ZAP! I'd go back to Vancouver Island, where my family come from.

**If you could be any team-mate, who would you be and why?**

I'd be Jeff Hassler because he trains the least and gets strong hair points.

**Your most embarrassing moment?**

I was chasing back for Cornish Pirates against Moseley and went head-first through some solid boards. The ref put his head over to see if I was alright, but no one helped me!

**How was the World Cup, off the field?**

We got treated like royalty and that was new to a lot of us. The fans were great. Not many of us are household names but there was a buzz. I was lucky enough to play in NZ in 2011 and this was even better.

**Who impressed you for Canada?**

Head and shoulders above was DTH van der Merwe. Jamie Cudmore and him are our marquee guys. When you have these guys you expect them to step up every time and they did that.

**How did you rate the performance of lower-tier teams?** The Japan defeat of South Africa shone out but performances from Georgia were great too. It was just the way Tier Two teams pulled out good performances. No team coasted to the quarters and maybe with four more years of development it will be even closer.

**So you'd like more meaningful Tests for Canada?** Absolutely. It would do us no end of good. It's difficult just turning up every four

years for World Cups. You need to get the fundamentals right. It can be difficult to put pressure on big teams and do Tier Two proud if you don't play as much.

**What would you like to achieve away from rugby?** I'd love to own my own coffee shop in Canada. My missus has one in Penzance called The Front Room. I wouldn't be working hard in mine, though. I fancy myself as a bit of a schmoozer! ☺

**What are your bugbears?**

I hate it when people don't help with carrying team kit and walk right past it. Gordon McRorie is bad for that.

**What is your guilty pleasure?**

I'm a big dessert man. I'm the first up for seconds and I'm always on hand if a team-mate doesn't fancy theirs.

**Who is your funniest team-mate?**

Jebb Sinclair probably thinks he's the funniest. I would say our prop Doug Wooldridge is a funny guy though. It's all about understanding his take on the world. It's not that realistic, I'd say.

**Any practical jokes you can share with us?**

The front-row guys like to do one where they fill a bin full of water and lean it against a door...

**Who would you like to be stuck in a lift with?**

Jessica Ennis. Because of her gold medals –

that's a real area of interest.

Definitely not for any other reason!

**Funniest on-pitch moment?**

Two streakers broke onto the pitch on the night we played against France! Well, they weren't wearing bottoms, but they did have on Canada tops.

**If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?**

Teleportation, because it would be good to get back to Canada regularly. But also if you're ever in trouble –

▲ High jinks

Evans in the air with Luke Fitzgerald

Gold standard  
Jessica Ennis-Hill



## THE FACTS MATT EVANS

Age 27 (2 Jan 1988)

Born Salisbury, England

Club Cornish Pirates

Position Full-back/wing

Height 6ft

Weight 14st 9lb

Canada caps 32 (8T)

Twitter @MattEvans\_88

**Make a date with your balls and check them monthly!**

## step one.

Feel one testicle at a time using both hands  
**Performed best after a warm bath or shower**



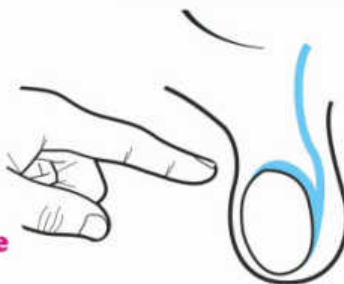
### ODDBALLS FACT

Human testicles are smaller than a chimpanzees but larger than a gorillas



## step two.

Inspect by rolling the testicle between thumb & fingers  
**Use gentle pressure**



### ODDBALLS FACT

An octopus's testicles are located inside its head

## step three.

Acquaint yourself with the spermatic cord & epididymis  
**Tube structures that connect to the back side of each testicle**



## step four.

Feel for lumps, bumps and changes in size  
**It is normal for one testicle to be larger than the other**

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# #RWCmoments

We asked what you'd remember most from the World Cup. Here are your views from social media



**@ICallachan** This was the first World Cup I've followed since I started coaching. Really enjoyed it and so have my boys

**@Rob\_Anderson\_UK** Better 4 England going out – removed tension & allowed me 2 enjoy **@buntygrunt** Japan & Fiji were A\*

**Calum F Hogan** David Pocock 17 turnovers... surely player of the tournament  
**Pauline Webb** Julian Savea's try

**Ian Thomas** Gotta be Irish fans. Unbelievable support, atmosphere  
**Kellyann Fletcher-Mathews** All Blacks v SA was supreme

**Ima.katch** I'm Aussie Canadian in Scotland. Such a bittersweet win/lose/happiness when Wallabies slid past Scotland

**@sarriefan\_uk** Prices for top matches, esp England, way too high, and food & drink at venues. Blatant rip-off. Otherwise fun

**@b3njay23** Highlights: Scottish interceptions and Japanese wizardry  
**@eejpullen** I was a volunteer and met fantastic people

**Erinmcr99** Watching Fitzpatrick and Pienaar shake hands and smile following the NZ v SA game. Warms your heart to see that

## SHORT PASS

### DATES FOR JAPAN

The 2019 World Cup in Japan will kick off in Tokyo on 20 September, with the final in Yokohama on 2 November.

### KIWI GLITTER

Dan Carter (right) was named World Rugby Player of the Year – for the third time – at an awards dinner in London. Other New Zealand winners were Julian Savea (Try of the Year), Nehe Milner-Skudder

(Breakthrough Player) and Kendra Cocksedge (Women's Player). Coach Michael Cheika, sevens star Werner Kok and referee Nigel Owens also picked up gongs.



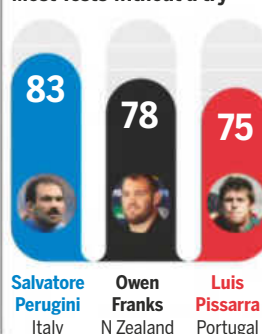
### CHAIR RAISING

Canada became world champions at wheelchair rugby after beating USA in the World Wheelchair Challenge final in London.

### GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Snoozebox Portable Hotel was a hit for fans struggling to find rooms in Cardiff during the RWC quarter-final weekend. Find out more at [snoozeboxhotel.co.uk](http://snoozeboxhotel.co.uk)

### Most Tests without a try



### ARMED FORCE

The Fijian Army are the International Defence Rugby Competition champions after beating the British Army 30-3 at the Stoop.

### EXILES HIT BIG APPLE

London Irish will become the first club to play an English Premiership fixture overseas when they take their round 16 home match to New York on Saturday 12 March.

# AGUSTÍN PICHOT

THE FORMER ARGENTINA CAPTAIN AND WORLD RUGBY BOARD MEMBER



## “Other Tier Two nations need our pathway”

**P**ROUD IS the word I'd use to describe Argentina's World Cup. The World Cup is not only about finals but about seeing improvements and Argentina played good rugby. I'm very proud of how they tried to play positive rugby and how this young team performed very well on the world stage.

It was different to the World Cups I played in (1999-2007). Then, one Argentina player got all the attention because we weren't a strong attacking side, whereas this team is, so the team as a whole stood out. They really stick to playing attacking rugby. Even in the semi-final against Australia, in the first ten minutes they made some mistakes but gave 100% to attack and to being positive.

How good can this Argentina team be? That depends on them. I'm sure they'll carry on working hard. The mindset changed in 2007 and we now look to challenge the big teams in Rugby World Cups.

The Rugby Championship has made the big difference for us. We're playing the best in the world week in, week out, so the players have had to improve and challenge themselves to try things and score more points to compete. The support of New Zealand, South Africa and Australia, and the home unions when we started this process, has been fantastic.

Having a Super Rugby franchise is another step up for domestic rugby in Argentina – the professional era starts in 2016. The only way to get better is to compete against the best and they'll have regular games against other franchises. It will not only help the team – the union will have control of the players rather than private equity teams in other countries – but develop the culture of professional rugby in Argentina.

We've shown with Argentina what can happen and the next challenge is to help other Tier Two nations have the same pathway. The only way to get better is to play against good teams, so we need to help Georgia, Romania, USA, Canada and so on grow the game, ensuring they have more competitions to make them stronger.


Now that I'm an ExCo member (World Rugby Executive Committee), I'll be supporting the Tier Two nations to get that same pathway. The biggest challenge World Rugby has is to convince the unions. I always talk about the challenge, not the problem; it's about finding a

solution. We know what the problems are, so you have to be clever to help every team get better. It's important that there are more fixtures for the development of the game, to make it stronger and stronger, so you must be creative. Perhaps you could have development teams like the Saxons playing against Tier Two nations.

The other areas I want to focus on as an ExCo member are a global calendar and player welfare. The most important thing in the game is the players, so we need to make sure they're in the best condition to play rugby.

I love the physicality of rugby – that's why you play – but we must protect players too. You're going to have injuries but they're at the same level – the numbers haven't gone up – and the concussion assessments have been good.

Still, we need to have the healthiest and safest game we can – and that has a lot to do with the global calendar. People think that it's financially better to play more games, but you can still make money playing less matches and keep players fitter and faster and stronger.

Rugby's played in two hemispheres so there are a lot of complexities to how you would fit everything in 52 weeks, but I think changing to a global calendar is best. We need creativity and to think outside the box, so everyone is happy. We need to work together with private equity teams, players and administrators. Some things will be given, some taken away, but it's the only way to do something better for the whole game. 

▼ **A joy to watch**  
Argentina scored 27 tries at this World Cup



PICTURES: ACTION IMAGES & GETTY IMAGES



# HOTSHOTS

Introducing two teenagers who have created a lot of hype in England and Scotland



INTERVIEWS: ALAN DYWOCK & NATIE FIELD. PICS: GETTY IMAGES & SNS GROUP/SRU

## MAT PROTHEROE GLOUCESTER

AGE 19 COUNTRY ENGLAND POSITION FLY-HALF



**When did you first play rugby?** When I was eight.

My best mate at school asked me along for one session at Waunarlwydd rugby club (near Swansea) and I never stopped going after that. I loved it. Later I played for Gwerton Comprehensive and my district side, as well as the club.

**Have you played in different positions?** I was No 10 until I went to Hartpury then, as it was a step up, I had a look at playing full-back and getting a different perspective. I still prefer to have that No 10 on my back.

**How did you end up at Hartpury?** At 16 I didn't get selected for the Ospreys and two days after the trials Alan Martinovic, the DoR at Hartpury, rang to offer me a rugby scholarship. I was planning to go to sixth-form college in Wales but decided to go to Hartpury instead. I lived there for two years but now share a flat in Gloucester.

**When did you first link up with England?** In 2014 I went to an U17 training camp, then last February I played for the U18s.

**Have you thought about playing for Wales?** I'm going to wait and see what happens. I'm very grateful for how England have treated me.

**Who has had a big influence on you?** Alan Martinovic, Sean Marsden, who was my U18 coach at Hartpury, and, above all, my grandmother Mary Walters. I lived with her from when I was eight, after my dad died. She is always at my games, cheering me on.

**What are your aims now?** I have enjoyed playing for Gloucester during the World Cup and if more game time comes my way, I will try to take my chance. I've trained with England U20 and would love to play for them.

▲ **Stepping up**  
Mat Protheroe in action for Gloucester



Every player featured as a Rugby World Hotshot will receive a one-year subscription to the magazine. If you have any Hotshot nominations, then please email [rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com)

### RW VERDICT

Gloucester fought off a number of other clubs to sign this highly-rated teenager. Naturally gifted, with bags of attacking flair, it looks like a case of when, not if, Protheroe becomes a household name.

## SCOTT CUMMINGS GLASGOW WARRIORS

AGE 18 COUNTRY SCOTLAND POSITION LOCK



**Where did rugby begin for you?**

I began playing at Kelvinside Academy in Primary Four. I played at No 8 early on – so I could get on the ball more – but by the time I was at Glasgow U16 I was a lock.

**Before Glasgow, who did you play for?**

I hadn't played any club rugby before joining Glasgow, but last season I played for Glasgow Hawks. I came in just in time for the derby game against Ayr. It was bigger than anything I'd experienced before.

**How have you found playing regularly for the Warriors?** It's been great. Just getting picked in the squad was a huge step up for me, to be involved with a lot of experienced guys around me. In the big, pressure situations they know so much. I never expected to start but it's been good.

**And you scored a try!** Yeah, but I wouldn't like to boast – it was my first try in about three years! I scored it against Connacht in a tight win.

We performed really well in the first half in that one and let it slip in the second, so I suppose it was an important try but I wasn't thinking that at the time – I was just trying to get past someone with the ball!

**What have you learnt?** It has been really good to call the lineouts in pre-season games and having Al Kellock around helps a lot. In games when lineouts haven't been great, it helps to have guys like Pat MacArthur and Chris Fusaro there. Then there's Jonny Gray's work ethic and Tim Swinson's power game to learn from.

### RW VERDICT

Thrust into action during pre-season, off the back of playing for Scotland U20, he has thrived for Glasgow and started regularly in the league. He has even deferred a degree in maths. Expect to see a lot of Cummings.

# “So Pudsey, what shade of fake tan do you use?”



PICS: JOE MEROITH/AMP & LEO WILKINSON PHOTOGRAPHY

**P**UDSEY POSES with Gavin Henson during his visit to Bristol to promote this month's BBC Children in Need appeal – but what might the pair be saying to each other?

Write a caption of no more than 20 words, mark it 'December Caption Comp' and email it to [rugbyworldcompetitions@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldcompetitions@timeinc.com). Or write to the editorial address on P42. Please include your name and address. The closing date is Tuesday 15 December.

The winner will receive a giftcard with £100 credit to spend at [rfudirect.com](http://rfudirect.com)



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## “Come on David, I was Mary Berry last time. It's my turn to be Paul Hollywood”



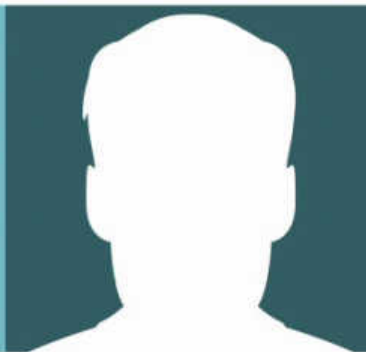
### LAST MONTH'S WINNER

Jon Windust, from Havant in Hampshire, gets the prize for his *The Great British Bake Off*-themed caption for this pic of England's George Kruis and David Wilson.



# THE SECRET PLAYER

THIS FORMER INTERNATIONAL GIVES US A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO THE PRO GAME



## “Give me the ‘happy psychotic’ coach any day”

W

HO WOULD be a professional rugby coach? Does anyone grow up dreaming of spending their working life poring over lineout clips or browsing rucking pad catalogues? It's a hard and largely thankless existence. Every week there will be

ten new problems from the previous game to sort, whilst cramming in endless analysis, coming up with a plan for the week's sessions and leading numerous box-ticking meetings. Although in truth, much of this work will be with the aim of keeping a squad of 40 men from becoming disillusioned and disengaged in between the highs of a Saturday afternoon. It can be glorified babysitting.

But they do work hard, with zero guarantee of reward. Winning or losing is largely out of their control. Having good enough players is a start, but then a ref may take a dislike to your side in a crucial match, the ball may bounce funny or the boys may simply not turn up. All the while you sit helpless in your little box. It must be soul-destroying.

Which is perhaps why the job attracts such a variety of odd individuals. A doctor friend once told me that there are two types of surgeon – the nervous neurotic and the happy psychotic. The same might be applied to rugby coaches. Both are ways of coping with outcomes out of your control. In the ‘happy psychotic’ category, I would probably place many of the more famous coaches, the ones you see popping up as pundits. I've been coached by a few of them, guys who won World Cups and Lions tours, and I've been struck in each case by the lack of concrete information they provided as to how they wanted to put their vision into practice. They are ‘big picture’ men. You can see it in their punditry and with increased exposure to their thoughts you feel that the rugby public might be starting to believe the emperor actually has no clothes.

I know I often had similar thoughts when these coaches would air their inchoate views in team meetings or during sessions. Basically, their underlings would be left to deal with the dirty work of improving skills and working out the mundane details of lineouts, backs moves and defensive structures. One of these rugby prophets took a suitably vague role at my club at the time and every Tuesday would take over training for 15 minutes. He'd then roll out the same archaic, irrelevant-to-the-modern-game drill, and after the third week of it the whole squad were privately mocking him and casting doubt on his credentials.

Rugby players are cynical, sceptical gits at the best of times, and an older me reckons we may have been wrong



▲ **Big characters**  
Coaches Joe Schmidt and Warren Gatland

to scoff. Rugby gets simpler, not more complicated, as the level gets higher, and perhaps these coaches had seen through all the flim-flam to what was really important – a solid set-piece, kicking points, making tackles. Oh, and also being lucky enough to inherit teams containing some of the best players the game's ever seen. That helps too.

There is more than one way to skin a cat, however, and there is a place at the top level for the other sort of coach – the ‘neurotic’; the micro-manager; the statistician who wants every aspect of the squad's existence measured and rated. His approach can get results as well, but as a player it is hard to live with from day to day. He has no doubt read every business management textbook going and there will be a lot of talk of “systems”, “processes” and “outcomes”. I had one guy at national level who went as far as to hold camps at a hotel conference centre, and called his post-match review the “statement of accounts”. These are coaches who are happiest giving PowerPoint presentations. Frankly, for the players, who just want to train hard, do their recovery and get home, it's murder.

What's more, it is this coach who is more likely to be into sticking axioms and truisms up wherever there's a spare bit of wall. Which, at best, are ignored by the players, and at worst have the opposite of their desired effect. Give me the happy psychotic any day, a coach who trusts his players to work hard and knows exactly what he wants from his team. The only downside is that what he wants is so back-of-a-fag-packet that he'll probably need a nervous neurotic as deputy. As a player, you really can't escape. **new**

# A trip to remember

Why RWC 2015 was so special for Samoan Ben Lei'a

**F**IVE YEARS ago, I was injured making a tackle in a match for the Marist club in Samoa. I was a scrum-half and had been a member of the Samoan U20 side, but I was injured at C4 level and left paralysed, with very limited movement.

The Matt Hampson Foundation has helped me a lot over the years. They sent a financial donation early on after the injury and have always been in contact via Freddie Tuilagi. They also funded my trip to England during the World Cup. I came over for three weeks with my care team and spent a lot of time with Matt, learning good lessons from him.

During the World Cup, I went to watch four games: Samoa v Japan in Milton Keynes, the All Blacks v Tonga and Scotland v Samoa up in Newcastle, which were great fun, and Argentina v Tonga in Leicester – the best game I saw live. I really enjoyed the South Africa v Japan game early on, too, and for me that was the best game of the World Cup.

It was a huge honour to be at one of the Samoa team's shirt presentations and I felt a lot of love from the boys. They told me to be strong, to have a brave heart and to be happy.

I also went to the Matt Hampson's England Legends v Joost's World



**Legend**  
Waisale Serevi in action for the World XV

Legends game at Allianz Park and even got to help coach the world team, which was an honour. The match itself was a try-fest, Hambo's team winning 57-38.

It was great fun and was certainly a trip I won't forget. Now I'm back in Samoa, I'm looking forward to travelling around and visiting other people with similar injuries to pass on what I've learnt from Matt and encourage them to Get Busy Living!

I still love rugby and coach my village side Satitoo – we are the current Shield holders. I really enjoy coaching and watching the games, and being over in the UK for the World Cup was awesome. **RW**



PICS: ACTION IMAGES; GETTY IMAGES & INPHO

▲ **Busy Living!** Ben Lei'a enjoys taking in the action during the Scotland v Samoa game at St James' Park



## Martín Landajo

Get to know more about the Argentina scrum-half

### HOBBIES

► I like to cook. I studied to be a chef when I was an amateur and I make a good seafood risotto.



### TOUGHEST OPPONENT

▲ As a team, New Zealand. As an individual, Richie McCaw because he makes our game very slow. And boring!



### FUNNIEST TEAM-MATE

◀ My captain, Agustín Creevy. He's a good impressionist and has a lot of jokes.



### BEST ROOM-MATE

► Santiago González Iglesias. He's been my room-mate for five years and is like my girlfriend! He's a good room-mate – I'm the one who snores.



### PRE-MATCH SONG

◀ I listen to an Argentine band called Los Boninitos, which translates as The Pretty Ones in English. It's dance music.



# When the All Blacks came to town

Danny Brown, DoR of Darlington Mowden Park, reveals what it was like to host New Zealand

**A**BOUT THREE years ago, England 2015 were looking for tenders for team training bases. We decided it would be a great thing to do and we knew our facilities were something special.

I think there were about 500-600 applications, which were narrowed down to 120 to be sent to the teams to see if they were interested. We got a visit from South Africa in late 2013, and in April 2014 Steve Hansen and the New Zealand management came.

Then it was a waiting game to see if anybody had chosen us. In May last year I got a phone call from England 2015 to say the All Blacks were coming. I was pretty speechless!

I wasn't allowed to say anything until it was all announced a few months later. It's not the easiest thing to keep quiet! I told my wife and the club chairman, but that was all.

It was a lot of hard work to get everything ready but I wanted to make sure everything was right. England 2015 were in touch every couple of days and we had visits from logistics and security people.

The All Blacks were here for five days and came to the ground to train on three or four days. We had everything closed off during their sessions, so we didn't disturb them.

I had chats with the coaches and some players, but I didn't want to pick their brains for advice!

You won't find a politer set of lads.



▲ **At home** Sonny Bill Williams and Sam Cane at DMP's stadium

Each team does some community engagements and at our stadium they did a coaching session with local children, which people could watch.

It couldn't have gone better. The tickets

were free and just over 4,000 went in six hours. In all, 220 children were coached by eight of the players and another eight players did a Q&A on a stage and played silly games, like how many balls they could catch and

hold at one time. The young lad who threw balls to Sonny Bill Williams was literally speechless. Those guys were in the biggest tournament of their lives but spent time with youngsters who will remember it forever.

The organisation was stressful at times, but 100% I'd do it again tomorrow if I could. They gave us a signed shirt for the clubhouse and were very grateful. Hansen said it was the best facility he's been to for training and that it could easily be a Test venue. That was the best thing they could have said. **EW**

## "THEY SPENT TIME WITH YOUNGSTERS WHO'LL REMEMBER IT FOREVER"

▲ **Kids' club** Liam Messam coaches local children



## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### THOM EVANS

AGE 30 POSITION WING CLUBS WASPS, GLASGOW SCOTLAND CAPS TEN

**My weekly routine now is different but still involves keeping fit.** I have one or two modelling jobs and fit in acting classes when I can. I train five times a week.

**I hate going to the gym.** I prefer sprint training and

I've taken up boxing. It's a full-body workout and a real team environment. I miss that about rugby.

**I'm moving to LA for a year.** Acting has been a struggle so far, it's really competitive but I enjoy it.

LA will be a chance for me to give it a good go.

**The World Cup kept me busy.** I ran lots of coaching sessions with kids. It's a good way to stay involved.

**I still play touch but I miss contact.** I played in the Rugby for Heroes match in September. Even though it was lighthearted, it was good

▲ **Flying Scot** Evans in 2009



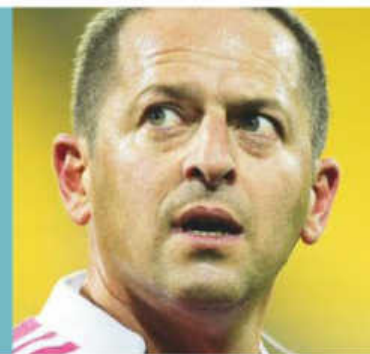
facing some of the 2003 England World Cup team.

**Strictly Come Dancing is one of the best things I've ever done.** I love a challenge and it has taught me a lot about myself.

**I love watching my brother Max play.** Since I retired, I haven't missed watching a game of his on TV.

# JONATHAN KAPLAN

THE SOUTH AFRICAN REFEREE WHO TOOK CHARGE OF 68 TESTS FROM 1996-2013



## “Some issues will not go away. The law book is in dire need of an overhaul”

**T**HERE WERE some strong positives to come out of the refereeing of the World Cup. Most games were won by the better team but there were a few matches where inconsistencies in application, poor preparation and simple errors were prevalent. And there are some issues which will not go away, no matter how much sweeping under the carpet is attempted.

The referees chosen for the knockouts were spot on. Obviously we had quite a bit of media reaction to the well-publicised error in awarding a penalty towards the end of the Australia v Scotland quarter-final. Whilst I feel for the Scots, social media in particular played a huge role in World Rugby's decision to put out an unprecedented statement “clarifying” the error for the edification of the public. This was ill-advised and counter-productive. Craig Joubert will have to continue his career with this stigma.

The law book itself is in dire need of an overhaul. The complexity of the law relating to this incident allowed so much conjecture and there are still those that aren't satisfied with the statement made by World Rugby.

On the positive side, I thought many referees had good


tournaments. Nigel Owens is peerless at the moment. He has a big-match temperament, game understanding, communication skills, quick wit and the courage to allow the game to unfold at pace. Wayne Barnes and Jérôme Garcès also had good tournaments. What must be worrying from a southern hemisphere perspective is that none of their referees were chosen for semis and beyond.

The judiciary made some odd decisions but that's nothing new. There's long been a disconnect between the referees and these men. There appeared to be inconsistencies in citings and sentences. Minnow nations feel they get the rough end of the stick, with the Tuilagi incident a classic case. Scotland too had reason to feel aggrieved as they almost lost two key players prior to their quarter-final. The fact the judiciary overturned the initial decision didn't come as a surprise, but what's of concern is that they came up with two wildly differing outcomes!

Scrum interpretation and the role of the TMO have been hot topics. I thought some referees didn't do enough homework on the dark art of front-row manipulation, or perhaps didn't receive enough coaching. The result was incorrect reward for transgression – with England-Wales and England-Australia two good examples. As a result, the shape of these games unfortunately changed.

I'm very sympathetic to referee errors made in motion but less so to errors when use of a TMO is available. After a shaky start – I'd never have used the RWC as a trial to make a statement for eliminating the neck roll and knee chop – the TMO work improved dramatically.

While some will point to inefficiency – Sean O'Brien's red-card punch wasn't spotted, Michael Hooper's illegal clean-out of Mike Brown was missed, Sean Maitland's yellow against Australia should have been nothing – some spots were exceptional. Furthermore, the communication between referee and TMO became a lot more streamlined as the World Cup went on.

This is a huge positive as technology is here to stay. The fact we get some review downtime is inevitable due to the demands of the sport. As long as referees are trying to own their decisions, and TMOs are attentive to the time delays that the public detest, we're on to a good thing. 

**Flash point**  
Hooper's illegal clean-out of Mike Brown went unpunished at the time



PICS: ACTION IMAGES & GETTY IMAGES



# Respect the referee

The vilification of Craig Joubert during RWC 2015 was unnecessary, argues RW reader Philip Eades

**T**HE ONGOING and emotive analysis of *that* decision by Craig Joubert in the Australia-Scotland quarter-final cast a dark shadow over a wonderful World Cup.

The public execution of Joubert by World Rugby, where they confirmed he was wrong to award a late penalty to Australia, merely served to undermine a core tenet of the game – that the referee is the sole judge of fact. They did acknowledge there was nothing he could have done after his initial call – which makes you wonder what they gained by going public.

He made a decision in real time, in a split-second, from one angle of view. Show me a referee who has never made a mistake. It happens and we usually move on. The problem with this decision is that within seconds we had slow-motion replays from multiple angles allowing a forensic dissection of events by the 80,000 'experts' in the stands, resulting in the crowd baying for the decision to be referred to the TMO, something the laws don't allow.

The two men who could legitimately offer additional information, the assistant referees, did not intervene. Therefore, had Joubert changed his mind it would have been on the basis of inadmissible evidence.

There is now much discussion about allowing more decisions to be



**Errant call**  
Joubert awards  
the decisive penalty


PICTURE: GETTY IMAGES

## MORE TMO REFERRALS WILL FURTHER UNDERMINE REFEREES' AUTHORITY

referred to the TMO, which will prove complex and will further undermine the authority of match officials.

Referees were criticised during the tournament for going to the TMO too often anyway. If we let referees use 'common sense' in deciding when to refer, how do we define common sense? And there is no doubt referees would come under increasing pressure from players to 'go upstairs'.

There is an alternative and simpler solution. Only allow replays during game time of decisions that can be referred to the TMO. If the TMO can't be involved, don't run multiple reruns on the large screens in the stadium because this serves no purpose.

All they do is create confusion and potentially inflame the situation, as happened in the Scotland match. If evidence is inadmissible, don't show it. Simples! 


### HAVE YOUR SAY

What gets your goat? Let us know on Facebook or by tweeting @rugbyworldmag

## HOT TOPIC

### THIS MONTH RWC PLATE COMP

Mark Coughlan proposed having a second-tier knockout tournament running alongside the final stages of the World Cup on [rugbyworld.com](http://rugbyworld.com) – read his article at [po.st/2ndTier](http://po.st/2ndTier). Here are your views on the idea from social media...

No-brainer. Would have sold lots of tickets for Japan-England.  @josiesdad

If you're knocked out, you're out. Let's celebrate the true

champions who deserve their moment in the real competition.  Rob Freight


What about 3rd and 4th team in each group playing




**Keep going**  
Should Japan have gone into a Plate event?

knockout rugby on Weds after group stage?

 @Wrighty2012


You might want to get WC on non pay-per-view in the US first.  Lawrence Latham


Clearly the correct way to spread the wealth and allow Tier Two nations to develop!  @StopJammerTime

We should have a similar format to the sevens with a

Plate for 3rd and 4th place in the pool stage.

 Bruce Williamson

How about more opportunities 4 Tier 2 to play Tier 1 outside of RWC. Tier 2s had some good showings this #RWC2015  @PDLachetti

We wouldn't be asking this question if England had qualified. Enough. Already.  Mark Davies

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# THE DIRECTORY

FRI 6 NOV

**Aviva Premiership**

Harlequins v Sale (7.45pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Guinness Pro12**

Connacht v Treviso (7.30)

Leinster v Scarlets (7.35)

TV Live on BBC Wales/TG4

**GK IPA Championship**

Bristol v Doncaster

Moseley v Cornish Pirates

WEEKEND 7-8 NOV

**Asia Sevens Olympic****Qualifier** (Hong Kong)

SAT 7 NOV

**International Friendly**

France v England Women

(4.45pm, Martigues)

**Aviva Premiership**

London Irish v Bath (3pm)

Worcester v Newcastle (3)

N'ampton v Saracens (3.15)

TV Live on BT Sport

Exeter v Leicester (5.30)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Guinness Pro12**

Ospreys v Zebre (2.30pm)

Cardiff Blues v Glasgow (3)

TV Live on Sky Sports

Edinburgh v Munster (5.15)

TV Live on BBC Alba/Sky

Top 14

Brive v Bordeaux-Bègles

La Rochelle v Oyonnax

Pau v Agen

Toulon v Montpellier

Toulouse v Grenoble

**GK IPA Championship**

Bedford v Yorks Carnegie

London Scottish v Jersey

London Welsh v Ealing

**Principality Premiership**

Bedwas v Aberavon

Bridgend v Pontypridd

Cardiff v Cross Keys

Llanelli v Llandovery

Neath v Carmarthen Quins

Newport v Ebbw Vale

**Ulster Bank League 1A**

Ballynahinch v Terenure Coll

Clontarf v Galwegians

Old Belvedere v Garryowen

UCD v Lansdowne

Young Munster v Cork Con

**BT Premiership**

Ayr v Glasgow Hawks

Gala v Selkirk

Heriot's v Boroughmuir

Melrose v Hawick

Stirling County v Currie

SUN 8 NOV

**Aviva Premiership**

Wasps v Gloucester (3pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Guinness Pro12**

Dragons v Ulster (2.30pm)

TV Live on S4C/BBC NI

Top 14

Castres v Racing

Stade Français v Clermont

**GK IPA Championship**

Nottingham v Rotherham

THU 12 NOV

**European Challenge Cup**

P3 Quins v Montpellier (7.45)

TV Live on Sky Sports

FRI 13 NOV

**European Champions Cup**

P4 Leicester v Stade F (7.45)

TV Live on BT Sport

**European Champions Cup**

P1 Oyonnax v Ulster (1pm)

Saracens v Toulouse (5.30)

TV Both live on Sky Sports

P3 Racing v Glasgow (3.15)

TV Live on Sky Sports

N'ampton v Scarlets (7.45)

TV Live on BT Sport

P4 Munster v Treviso (5.15)

TV Live on Sky Sports

**European Challenge Cup**

P1 Enisei v Connacht (11am)

P2 Pau v Castres (7.45pm)

P3 Calvisano v Car Blues (2)

P4 W'cester v La Rochelle (3)

Gloucester v Zebre (3.15pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

P5 Leinster v Wasps (1pm)

Toulon v Bath (3.15pm)

TV Both live on BT Sport

**European Challenge Cup**

P2 Dragons v Sale (3.15pm)

TV Live on Sky Sports

**British & Irish Cup**

Scarlets Select v Bedford

Y Carnegie v Ospreys Select

THU 19 NOV

**European Challenge Cup**

P3 Car Blues v Quins (7.45)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P4 La Rochelle v Glos (7.45)

FRI 20 NOV

**European Champions Cup**

P1 Ulster v Saracens (7.45)

Scarlets v Racing (5.30)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P4 Treviso v Leicester (1pm)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P5 Bath v Leinster (3.15pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

**European Challenge Cup**

P1 Connacht v Brive (5pm)

P2 Sale v Pau (2.30pm)

Castres v Dragons (4pm)

P4 Zebre v Worcester (2)

P5 Grenoble v L Irish (7.45)

**British & Irish Cup**

Bedford v Ulster A

Doncaster v Conn Eagles

Ealing v Rotherham

Lon Welsh v C Blues Select

**BT Premiership**

Currie v Boroughmuir

Gala v Glasgow Hawks

Heriot's v Selkirk

Melrose v Ayr

Stirling County v Hawick

SUN 22 NOV

**European Champions Cup**

P2 Clermont v Ospreys (1)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P4 Stade F v Munster (3.15)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P5 Wasps v Toulon (5.15pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Challenge Cup**

P1 Newcastle v Enisei (3)

**British & Irish Cup**

Bristol v Scarlets Select

Dragons Select v Jersey

Nottingham v C Pirates

FRI 27 NOV

**Aviva Premiership**

N'hampton v Glos (7.45)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Guinness Pro12**

Edinburgh v Dragons (7.35)

TV Live on BBC Scot/Wales

Glasgow v Treviso (7.35)

Leinster v Ulster (7.35pm)

TV Live on TG4/BBC NI

Top 14

Montpellier v La Rochelle

**GK IPA Championship**

Bristol v London Scottish

Yorks Carnegie v Lon Welsh

SAT 28 NOV

**Aviva Premiership**

Sale v Newcastle (2.30pm)

Exeter v Harlequins (3pm)

Saracens v Worcester (3.15)

TV Live on BT Sport

London Irish v Wasps (5.30)

TV Live on BT Sport

**Guinness Pro12**

Ospreys v Cardiff Blues (3)

TV Live on Sky Sports

21<sup>st</sup>

NOVEMBER, 3.05pm

BAA-BAAS v ARGENTINA

FOR TICKETS SEE  
TICKETMASTER.CO.UK**European Challenge Cup**

P1 Brive v Newcastle (6.30)

P5 E'burgh v Grenoble (7.30)

**British & Irish Cup**

London Scottish v Munster

Ulster A v Bristol

SAT 14 NOV

**International Friendly**

England v Ireland Women

(3pm, Twickenham Stoop)

TV Live on englandrugby.com

P5 London Irish v Agen (3)

**British & Irish Cup**

C Blues Select v Nottingham

Conn Eagles v Dragons Select

Cornish Pirates v Lon Welsh

Jersey v Doncaster

Moseley v Ealing Trailfinders

Rotherham v Leinster A

**BT Premiership**

Boroughmuir v Ayr

Currie v Heriot's

Glasgow Hawks v Melrose

Hawick v Gala

Selkirk v Stirling County

SUN 15 NOV

**European Champions Cup**

P2 Bordeaux v Clermont (1)

TV Live on BT Sport

Ospreys v Exeter (5.30pm)

TV Live on Sky Sports

TV Live on BT Sport

**European Challenge Cup**

P3 M'pellier v Calvisano (7.30)

P5 Agen v Edinburgh (6.30)

**British & Irish Cup**

Leinster A v Moseley

Munster A v Yorks Carnegie

Ospreys Select v L Scottish

SAT 21 NOV

**International Friendly**

Barbarians v Argentina

(3.05pm, Twickenham)

TV Live on Sky Sports

**European Champions Cup**

P1 Toulouse v Oyonnax (3.15)

TV Live on BT Sport

P2 Exeter v Bordeaux (7.45)

TV Live on BT Sport

P3 Glasgow v N'mpton (5.15)

TV Live on Sky Sports

## EXTRA EXTRA!

For all the latest fixture dates, as well as Six Nations info, visit [po.st/RWfixtures](http://po.st/RWfixtures)



Foot race Joe Simpson and Sébastien Tillous-Borde tussle last season

22<sup>nd</sup>

NOVEMBER, 5.15pm

**WASPS v TOULON**

FOR TICKETS SEE  
WASPS.CO.UK

Munster v Connacht (5.15)

TV Live on Sky Sports

#### Top 14

Agen v Castres  
Bordeaux-Bègles v Pau  
Clermont v Toulon  
Oyonnax v Brive  
Racing v Toulouse

#### GK IPA Championship

Doncaster v Moseley  
Ealing v Nottingham  
Rotherham v Jersey  
**Principality Premiership**  
Aberavon v Ebbw Vale  
Bedwas v Pontypridd  
Carmarthen v Bridgend  
Cross Keys v Neath  
Llandoverly v Cardiff  
Llanelli v Newport

#### Ulster Bank League 1A

Galwegians v Ballynahinch  
Garryowen v UCD  
Lansdowne v Clontarf  
Old Belvedere v Cork Con  
Terenure Coll v Y Munster  
**BT Premiership**  
Ayr v Gala  
Boroughmuir v Melrose  
Glasgow Hawks v Stirling  
Hawick v Heriot's  
Selkirk v Currie

SUN 29 NOV

#### Aviva Premiership

Leicester v Bath (3pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

#### Guinness Pro12

Scarlets v Zebre (2.30pm)

TV Live on S4C

#### Top 14

Grenoble v Stade Français  
**GK IPA Championship**  
Cornish Pirates v Bedford  
WEEKEND 4-5 DEC

#### HSBC World Sevens Series

(Dubai)

TV Live on Sky Sports

FRI 4 DEC

#### Aviva Premiership

Gloucester v Sale (7.45pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

#### Guinness Pro12

Car Blues v Connacht (7.05)

TV Live on BBC Wales/TG4

Ulster v Edinburgh (7.35pm)

TV Live on BBC NI/ALBA

#### GK IPA Championship

Jersey v Ealing Trailfinders  
Nottingham v Yorks Carnegie  
SAT 5 DEC

#### Aviva Premiership

Harlequins v Lon Irish (3pm)  
Worcester v Leicester (3pm)  
Bath v Northampton (3.15)

TV Live on BT Sport

Wasps v Exeter (5.30pm)

TV Live on BT Sport

#### Guinness Pro12

Treviso v Scarlets (2pm)

Glasgow v Leinster (3)

TV Live on Sky Sports

#### Top 14

Brive v Clermont Auvergne  
Castres v Montpellier  
La Rochelle v Grenoble  
Pau v Racing  
Stade Français v Bordeaux  
Toulon v Agen  
Toulouse v Oyonnax

#### GK IPA Championship

Bedford v Doncaster  
Lon Scottish v Rotherham  
Lon Welsh v Cornish Pirates  
Moseley v Bristol

#### Principality Premiership

Bedwas v  
Carmarthen  
Cardiff v  
Aberavon  
Cross Keys v  
Llandoverly  
Ebbw Vale v  
Bridgend  
Newport v  
Neath

Pontypridd v Llanelli

#### Ulster Bank League 1A

Ballynahinch v Lansdowne  
Clontarf v Terenure College  
Cork Con v Garryowen  
UCD v Old Belvedere  
Young Munster v Galwegians  
**BT Premiership**  
Currie v Hawick  
Gala v Melrose  
Heriot's v Glasgow Hawks  
Selkirk v Boroughmuir  
Stirling County v Ayr

10<sup>th</sup>

DECEMBER, 2.30pm

**OXFORD v CAMBRIDGE**

FOR TICKETS SEE  
TICKETMASTER.CO.UK



Varsity blues  
Can Oxford retain  
the trophy?

PICS: GETTY IMAGES & INPHO

SUN 6 DEC

#### Aviva Premiership

Newcastle v Saracens (3)

TV Live on BT Sport

#### Guinness Pro12

Zebre v Ospreys (2pm)  
Dragons v Munster (2.30)

TV Live on S4C

THU 10 DEC

#### Varsity Matches

Oxford v Cambridge Women  
(11.30am, Twickenham)  
Oxford v Cambridge Men  
(2.30pm, Twickenham)

TV Both live on BBC

#### European Challenge Cup

P4 Worcester v Glos (7.45)

TV Live on Sky Sports

P5 Agen v Grenoble (7.45)

FRI 11 DEC

#### European Champions Cup

P1 Ulster v Toulouse (7.45)

TV Live on BT Sport

#### European Challenge Cup

P1 Connacht v N'castle (7.45)

P3 C Blues v M'pellier (7.30)

P4 La Rochelle v Zebre (7)

#### British & Irish Cup

Bristol v Bedford  
Leinster A v Ealing  
Munster A v Ospreys Select

WEEKEND 12-13 DEC

#### HSBC World Sevens Series

(Cape Town)

● All kick-offs UK & Ireland.  
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# HOW THE WORLD CUP WAS WON

Ex-England No 10 **Stuart Barnes** reflects on New Zealand's record third title and pinpoints the keys to their success



**T** WICKENHAM, 31 October 2015: this was more than a triumph for New Zealand; the win against Australia in the World Cup final and a successful defence of their title was a victory for the sport itself. New Zealand have been pretty much the best team in the world since the game turned professional, yet their failure to dominate this one,



WORDS:  
STUART BARNES

solitary tournament has been cited as proof of both their fallibility and the nature of their playing style.

The All Blacks shrugged that fallibility issue off because the pressure – the one factor that has fuelled their failure more than any other in previous World Cups – was handled with the same sort of disdain they showed France in the quarter-final. The Kiwis, with three wins from eight World Cups, are no longer the 'chokers', they are the most successful →





**Cool as you like** Dan Carter drops a goal in the final

→ tournament team in the world as well as the best. They are the template. Thank the rugby gods for that.

Steve Hansen's team stayed and played true to their rugby conventions and revealed the rest of the world as the distant pursuers they are. To catch the Kiwis it is necessary not to copy them – imitation won't beat the real thing (England thought they could imitate them in 2014 and in the 2015 Six Nations and became confused), but to understand the combination of factors that make this the greatest rugby team of them all.

Rugby instinct is a good place to start. I was pulled up a few years ago by Wayne Smith, one of New Zealand's assistant coaches, for calling it rugby 'intellect'. Smith is a great believer that players shouldn't think on the field. That they should be so well coached that they know

## “THIS IS THE GREATEST RUGBY TEAM OF THEM ALL”

what to do without thinking. This is what the Kiwis call instinct. The Australians have their share of instinct too, but not many other teams do.

Instinct is Conrad Smith knowing when to commit himself to an attempted turnover and when to stay in his midfield defensive channel. Instinct is the same bloke knowing when to sprint a metre offside to save a try at the price of a yellow card. Instinct is just about everything that Smith's team-mate Dan Carter does when he is focused on the big game.

It comes with endless repetition and constant challenging at training. It comes with players being encouraged to think for themselves. I can think of at least three of the Six Nations teams who failed on that score during this World Cup.

Instinct's partner is basic skill. The instinct tells you what to do in the flick of an eye, the basic skills enable you not just to realise what is required but to have the facility to turn the understanding into a successful action during a match.

Cast your eyes back to the quarter-final in Cardiff and the 62-13 demolition of France. One of the most talked-about moments of the match was loosehead prop Joe Moody's softest of offloads for one of the late



**Basic instinct**  
Ben Smith in training



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avalanche of tries. The scorer isn't the point, the pass and the identifier of the pass is what counts. How the world drooled at the very thought of a prop being able to pass. But why shouldn't props pass?

New Zealand require sufficient technical expertise from their props to ensure stability in the scrum. They do not select 24st giants whose girth is such that they cannot get their arms around their body to take and give a pass. Every kid from an early age in New Zealand is expected to be able to do these basics. This is not so in much of the northern hemisphere. It once was in Wales, when the teaching profession was awash with high-calibre coaching, but with that demise it is interesting to note how Wales have become a nation of muscle and lost their subtle skills and basics.

Richie McCaw's career has been defined at the breakdown and the art of captaincy but the floated pass he threw for the first try in the semi-final against South Africa was textbook perfect. We'll come back to McCaw



**All-round game** Joe Moody can pass and scrummage

## "INSTINCT, SPEED, HEART ARE THE COMMODITIES THAT COUNT"

and what else he represents later, but for the moment it is worth focusing on another aspect of the game where New Zealand excel: their trust in talent. Big is not beautiful in New Zealand; instinct, speed, heart – these are the commodities that count.

The All Blacks management trust in them. Julian Savea, whose eight tries equalled the RWC tournament record of Bryan Habana and Jonah Lomu, is a classic case in point. A hat-trick on his debut against Ireland in 2012 was followed by an afternoon of elementary errors. He caught nothing bar a cold.

Hansen dropped the wing from the team but not from the squad. He kept him close and worked with him, let Savea know he was special. When some less-than-special behaviour off the field caused headlines, the New Zealand management criticised him publicly, then took him into the fold and sorted his problems out behind closed doors. They do not waste talent. They are not interested in 'role models' other than the ones they fashion.

Ma'a Nonu is another, even more distinguished All Black whose career needed coaxing in its early stages. It took a while for him to focus fully on the game. Some coaches would have lost patience, not New Zealand ones – and he won his 100th cap at RWC 2015. →

**The fast show** Julian Savea ran in a hat-trick against France in the quarter-final



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Which brings us nicely to Carter. Word was back in 2013 that Carter might not make it to 2015. Whispers turned to rumours. My Kiwi rugby colleagues at Sky were talking up the rivals. But back in 2013 I had bumped into Steve Hansen and his backs coach Ian Foster at an airport after a Six Nations game.

It was around the time Hansen was calling northern hemisphere rugby "boring". That was on the record. Off the record was the fact that he never expected any of the troika of McCaw, Carter or Conrad Smith to be absent except through injury come the final stages of 2015.

These guys were being debated because they were not playing that well, that often, for their provincial teams. The Crusaders pair of McCaw and Carter, in particular, were struggling. But both men had the support of their coach in a way that someone like George Ford, who needed it even more, never had.

Both repaid the faith of their management, with Carter producing three tremendous knockout-stage displays, peaking with his 69th-minute drop-goal in his Man of the Match final performance which helped engrave New Zealand as champions for four more years.

Yet for all the plaudits that the sensitive management skills of Hansen have deservedly received, there is another factor located far from the thrills and spills of

## "THE TOP-DOWN CONTROL OF NZ RUGBY IS VITAL"

the World Cup that aided and assisted the All Black cause. The Kiwi head coach brought up the subject mid-tournament when he stated that the top-down control of New Zealand rugby was a vital part of getting a team together and in peak condition.

The international game is the priority of New Zealand rugby, as it is in the other three Rugby Championship nations. Is it a coincidence that this was the first year no 'Old World' country made the semi-finals? Whereas Hansen has the freedom to tell Carter to take a rest, Conrad Smith a sabbatical, Richie a few weeks longer than he might need to recover from another knock, in England and France the clubs are the primary payers; they are the pipers playing the professional tune.

Whilst the Highlanders would have been ecstatic to have won a first Super Rugby title this season, most, if not all, of their supporters would have traded that triumph for the greater global glory of the nation. That is not the case in France or England.

Much money and effort is being sunk into the professional club game. Why would Bruce Craig, for example, put the priorities of the national team ahead of his own business, Bath? He would be a rare



▲ In the driving seat  
Steve Hansen with  
Richie McCaw

businessman were this the case. It is not a matter of pointing the finger of blame, rather reminding ourselves that the internationally-driven South has an advantage over the two largest nations in the North.

Ireland, in particular, and Wales do not have quite the same degree of difficulty as French and English coaches, but that did not stop them failing where New Zealand succeeded. In Ireland's demise against Argentina we can detect a reason for All Black success: experience.

Minus Paul O'Connell and Johnny Sexton, their two major leaders, they could not stop things falling apart when Argentina tested the boundaries of their usual game. Four years ago Carter's injury and the broken foot of McCaw almost did for the overwhelming favourites. Had Carter stayed fit, they would have won the World Cup at a canter. Had McCaw not played with a foot broken in three places (you want to talk about the meaning of 'inspirational'), New Zealand would have lost to a French team that stumbled into the final.

Even with all the foundations in place, it helps to have two of the greatest players ever to have played their ➔

## STUART BARNES'S WORLD CUP STARS



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He stepped into one of the biggest pairs of boots in the game and filled them. The king of lineouts, Victor Matfield is nearly (not quite) gone but long live this kid, who does so much more.



**AYUMU GOROMARU**  
**JAPAN**

He will be remembered for his magnificent performance in Japan's glorious day against South Africa, but the tackle that flattened Tommy Seymour four days later at Gloucester was just as memorable.



**MAMUKA GORGODZE**  
**GEORGIA**

Matt Giteau, Nicolás Sánchez, Juan Martín Hernández... all Toulon stars who left a mark but none sweated blood for their nation's cause quite as much as the granite-like Georgian, Mamuka Gorgodze.



# FOLLOW WALES

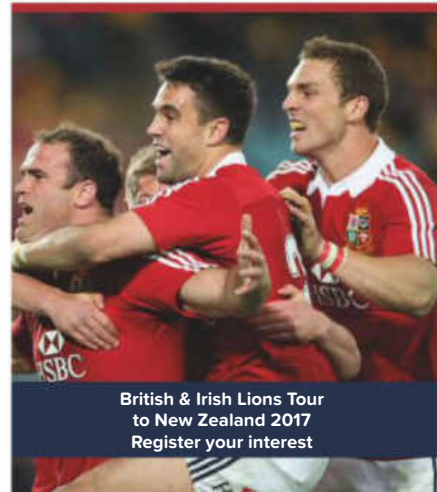
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ARGENTINA

He gave everything for the Pumas cause. Steely in the set-piece in the best tradition of Puma front-rows but a turnover king and an offloader nicknamed Sonny Bill for obvious reasons.



**MIHAI MACOVEI**  
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Another Eastern European who left his mark on stronger teams. The Romania back-row and captain was an inspiration throughout his country's campaign and scored two tries in the win over Canada.



**NEHE MILNER-SKUDDER**  
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→ sport sharing the field. McCaw is the spiritual leader, the man they follow, the man in the ear of the referee. Carter is the softly-spoken visionary who plays with more breadth of vision than any player in my lifetime.

A leader in the tight where the battle rages and a general to oversee the field of battle; it was noticeable that when the All Blacks emerged from the tunnel for the second half of the final, McCaw led his team out with Carter a couple of feet behind him. The last 40 minutes of their international careers (although

▲ **Catch us if you can**  
Beauden Barrett  
scores New Zealand's  
third try in the final

winner's medal. He is a product of a system that produces more outstanding rugby players than any other country in the world. He is a product of a system that produces more outstanding coaches than any country in the world. And he is a product of a system that bows to national interests.

Even so, there are very few of the likes of McCaw and Carter to come along in a generation. Both these men have been chiselled by a superb system but that alone is not enough to touch individuals with greatness. Their arrival at roughly the same time gave New Zealand a perfect opportunity to turn superiority into complete global dominance.

That is pretty much what has happened in the past ten years of international rugby outside the World Cup. Carter's injury during the quarter-final in 2007,

## "THE NZ SYSTEM BOWS TO NATIONAL INTERESTS"

McCaw made no promises in his immediate post-match interviews) saw these two rugby gunslingers coming out together for one last draw.

Nonu's try early in the second half seemed to settle the occasion but Australia are a nation short on respect during a fray. Back they came. When Tevita Kuridrani scored and Bernard Foley converted to bring the margin to a mere four points, momentum swung. Maybe it would have kept swinging the way of the Wallabies had McCaw's sidekick not fired the greatest drop-goal of his career to damage the temporary fightback.

Five minutes later and a 50m penalty sealed New Zealand's third World Cup and Carter's first final

► **Rugby playground**  
Kiwi kids work on their skills from a young age



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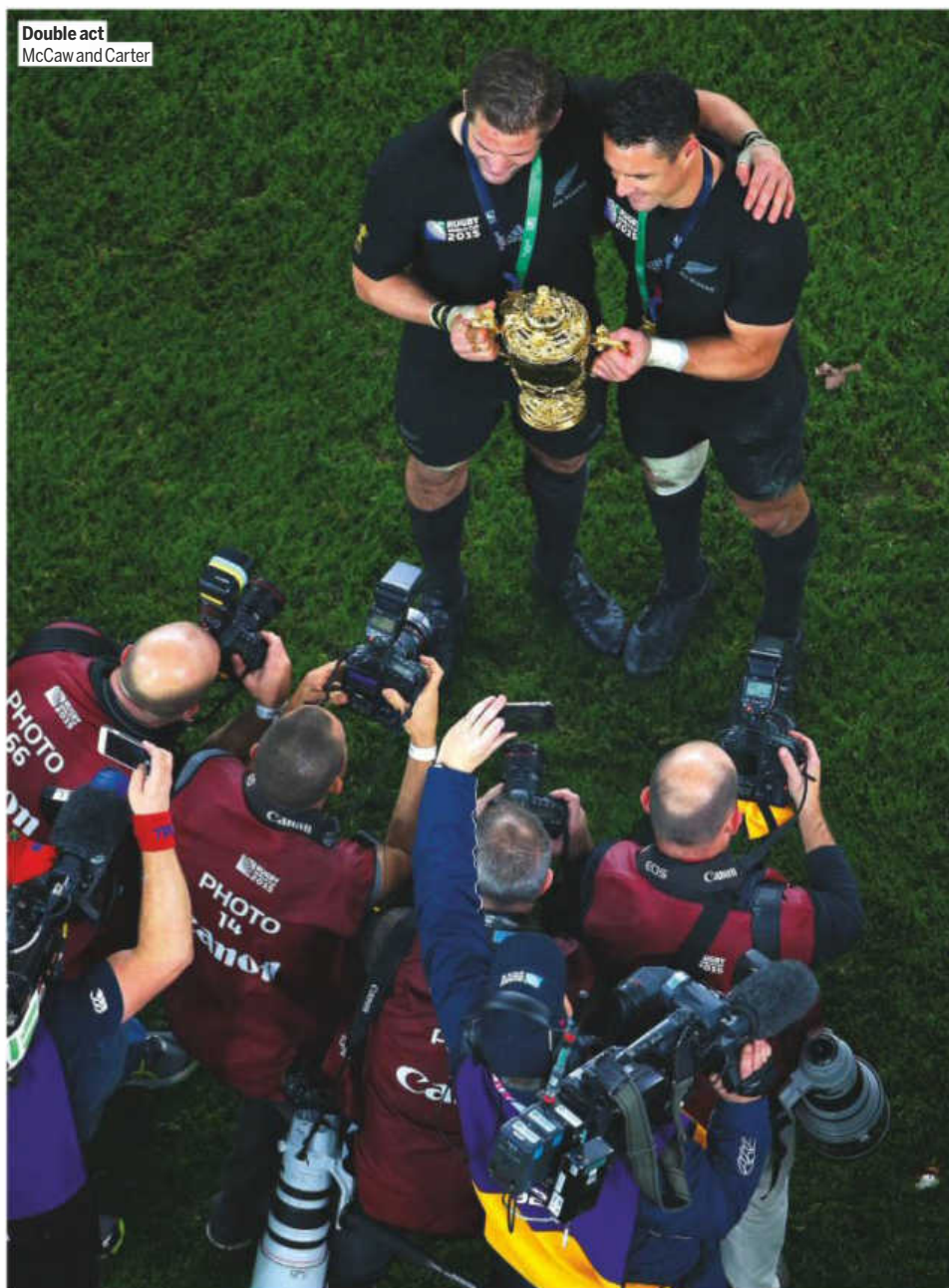
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**Double act**  
McCaw and Carter



## “IMITATION ALONE WILL GET THE CHASING PACK NOWHERE”

along with his absence and McCaw's debilitating foot injury in 2011, has cast the rugby world in a false light. This really should have been New Zealand's fourth title in eight World Cups.

Would that reflect the supremacy of New Zealand, their systems, their coaching, their hunger for the black shirt? Probably not, but at least the narrow-minded cynics and knockers cannot now deny just how exceptional New Zealand rugby is.

Imitation alone will get the chasing pack nowhere, but understanding – that would be a first step to stopping New Zealand making it four from nine in 2019. **rw**





England 2015



# NEHE MILNER-SKUDDER

The New Zealand winger's first steps on the world stage have wowed, says RW's Sarah Mockford

**I**F RUGBY players had walkout music like boxers, *Here Comes The Hotstepper* would be the perfect tune for Nehe Milner-Skudder. The footwork of New Zealand's newest wing has dazzled and delighted all year, first for the Hurricanes and then for the All Blacks – and this is how the World Cup played out for him.

Game one: Sonny Bill Williams offloads the ball to Milner-Skudder close to the line but he knocks it on and misses out on a try-scoring opportunity against Argentina.

Game two: He sidesteps round the Namibia defence for one try, dives over in the corner for another and produces a brilliant offload for Codie Taylor to score too.

Game three: He notches another brace and sets up Ma'a Nonu for a try with a great break against Tonga.

Game four: Nonu returns the favour in the quarter-final match-up with France, a quick pass releasing Milner-Skudder, who sidesteps round Brice Dulin and sprints clear of Scott Spedding to score.

Game five: No tries for the winger in the South Africa semi-final, but his kicking game came to the fore as New Zealand focused on putting boot to ball to pressurise the Boks.

Game six: He scores the opening try of the World Cup final against Australia, put over in the corner by his skipper Richie McCaw.

All in all not a bad tournament for a man who four years ago had just switched back to union, joining Manawatu after a spell in rugby league with Canterbury Bulldogs. This was his first season in the Hurricanes squad – he helped them to the Super Rugby final – and he

Golden time Nehe (left) with Ma'a Nonu and Sonny Bill Williams



made his New Zealand debut only three months ago. Yet he has scored eight tries in eight Tests – one of only four players to achieve that feat in 2015 – so it was fitting that the day after the World Cup final he picked up World Rugby's Breakthrough Player of the Year award.

What's most refreshing about Milner-Skudder, though, is that at 5ft 11in and a little over 14st he proves you don't have to be a giant in the mould of George North or Julian Savea to enjoy success on the wing in modern-day rugby.

As his coach Steve Hansen says: "He's not a big man but isn't it wonderful for rugby that all shapes and sizes can play the game. He is just reinforcing that. You don't have to be a big 105kg or 110kg winger. He is a little guy, but he's great on his feet, he can turn on a sixpence and he's got genuine gas."

The worrying thing for opponents is that those who know him best believe there is more to come from him. Sale and Samoa centre Johnny Leota grew up with Milner-Skudder on New Zealand's North Island and

always believed he had the capability to play at the top level.

"I knew him from when he was a little boy – I was good mates with his older brother," explains Leota. "We had a touch team and he was 11, and we'd bring him to training. He used to do some damage. Even then he was doing behind-the-back passes and stepping around adults, so we always knew he was going to be something special; it was only a matter of time."

"There are still parts of his game that people haven't seen. Obviously he's got good feet and he can kick, but he's got a distributing game as well and a wicked pass. He works hard and he's clever, so he knows what's ahead of him. I think we've only seen about 85% of him – the best is still to come."

The man himself is pretty humble, the softly-spoken, soon-to-be 25-year-old keen to talk more about the honour and privilege of playing alongside legends of the game like McCaw, Nonu and Dan Carter than his own abilities. He's now part of an All Blacks generation who will strive for more success without those three icons, amongst others. So how does he think New Zealand will fare in their absence?

"These guys are legends and there will be a massive hole left without them – they have been around for a long time and they will be hard to replace – but the new cabs off the rank will hold us in good stead," he says. "New Zealand rugby is in a pretty good place and there's a new crop of players coming through. They now have a chance to become legends of the game."

New Zealand's hotstepper is on course to be one of them. **EW**

## NEHE'S STANDOUT STATISTIC

### 15 CLEAN BREAKS

Milner-Skudder broke the line more than any other player at RWC 2015, as well as topping the metres made chart (561) and scoring six tries

## FACT FILE

Age 24 (15 Dec 1990)

Born Taihape

Franchise Hurricanes

NZ caps Eight

NZ points 40 (8T)

Twitter name

@Nmilnerskudder





2015 WORLD CUP  
HEADLINE MAKERS

# MARIO LEDESMA

The Argentinian who has revolutionised Australia's scrum talks to RW's Frankie Deges

**T**HE SCRUM is a physical, tactical and mental challenge," says Mario Ledesma. "If you win the scrum battle, you are imposing yourself on the opposition."

Australia have struggled to do that for a decade, their scrum seen as the weakest part of their game, but since former Argentina hooker Ledesma joined Michael Cheika's coaching staff earlier this year, the Wallabies pack has been a revelation.

Ledesma ran the Pumas scrum between 1996 and 2011, so hiring him was a shrewd call by Cheika and the

Fresh thinking  
Mario Ledesma



improvements up front were evident during Australia's march to the World Cup final, especially against England.

"When I got involved earlier in the year, I had my scrum way and the

players had theirs," he says. "Michael wanted us to hook the ball, so I had to adapt the eight-man shove, or *bajada* as we call it back home, to do that. So we'll first hook, then the hooker will realign and go into a push position to continue to exert pressure on the opposition."

"The scrum has changed a lot over the past four years; it had lost some of its shape but today it is all about technique and ensuring scrummaging becomes a habit for the players."

Key to the progress has been the fact the players have bought

## FACT FILE

Age 42 (17 May 1973)  
Born Buenos Aires  
Role Forwards coach  
Clubs coached Stade F, Montpellier, Waratahs  
Argentina caps 84  
Argentina points 15 (3T)  
Twitter @mledesmasports



# ANTHONY WATSON

England flopped but their winger wouldn't look out of place in an All Black jersey, says RW's Alan Pearey

**T**HERE WERE precious few bright spots for the hosts at England 2015, but one came in the shape of their 21-year-old winger who still topped one of the attacking stats tables long after the Red Rose withered in the Pool of Death.

To Anthony Watson's 11 clean breaks can be added a couple of tries against Uruguay, the classy finish against Australia that gave England brief but false hope, and a trail of nonplussed defenders able to see at close quarters the footwork and evasion skills that make him an automatic choice for his beleaguered country.

No one in world rugby scored more Test tries than Watson this year, his haul of eight showcasing his impressive athleticism: stooping low to gather Mike Brown's grubber against Wales in the Six Nations, rising high to out-jump Ireland's Simon Zebo in the final RWC warm-up.

Fifteen caps into his England career, it's easy to forget he only made his Test debut a year ago, a baptism of fire against the All Blacks that followed intervention from a mind coach, Don Macpherson, to control the nerves that were plaguing Watson's enjoyment of the game.

The former Chelsea triallist was shy in his teens, and got laughed



**Elusive** Beating Bernard Foley

at the first time he trained with London Irish's seniors for messing up a ladders drill. But his new club Bath have brought him out of his shell by asking him to lead meetings, and he now plays like he knows he belongs – he'd look at home in New Zealand's back three, let alone England's.

The only issue is where to play him. He's played extensively at full-back

– and is even listed as such on the RFU website – and some argue a permanent switch would offer an attacking verve not seen since the days of Iain Balshaw.

Watson isn't getting ahead of himself, keen to see the positives from a failed campaign. "It's important to learn from this experience. The advantage I have is that I've played in this World Cup at a young age and hopefully I can take the lessons into the next one and be more experienced and wiser." We could be in for a treat in Japan. **RW**



**Wat's up** Scoring England's 1,500th try

## FACT FILE

**Age** 21 (26 Feb 1994)  
**Born** Ashford, Middlesex  
**Club** Bath  
**Height** 6ft 1in  
**Weight** 14st 9lb  
**England caps** 15  
**England points** 40 (8T)  
**Twitter** @anthonywatson\_



**Golden wonder**  
The Wallaby pack drives England back

## MARIO'S STANDOUT PLAYERS

### AUSTRALIA

"Matt Giteau adds so much to the team it's hard to describe. He's brought a winning mentality."

### REST OF THE WORLD

"Like Matt, Schalk Burger is a great asset to the Boks – what a player!"

into Ledesma's ideas. "When the team responds, everything is much easier. The Wallaby forwards are naturally and mentally strong; they have a new identity and philosophy, are all very committed to the team."

A solid scrum means Australia's exciting backs have the platform to attack and Ledesma pays tribute to Cheika for turning around the side's fortunes. "The way the Wallabies play is down to Michael. He set the ground rules and brought a new spirit to a team that had issues on and off the field in the past. It's a joy for players and management now." **RW**



# JOHN HARDIE

The Kiwi flanker more than justified his selection for Scotland, says RW's Richard Bath

**V**ERN COTTER is so inscrutable that most of the time his players have no idea what he is thinking. It is rare indeed to get a glimpse inside the mind of the man driving a sea change in the Scotland team, yet one such occasion occurred when Highlanders openside John Hardie turned up shortly after the Dunedin franchise had romped to the Super Rugby title.

Clubless and jobless, Hardie arrived in Scotland carrying little more than a passport, his kit and the memory of his grandmother Christina Lumsden, who left the achingly beautiful Fife town of Culross for New Zealand's Southland region as a teenager in 1925. That last bit was the key – there could only be one reason why Hardie was in Scotland and try as Cotter might to suggest that Hardie was not on a promise, few were buying it.

So there was little surprise when, despite having played just 57 minutes



**Quick thinking** Offloading in the build-up to his own try v Japan

prop Peter Wright called the decision “disgusting – it demeans the jersey” while the usual tsunami of vitriol exploded on social media.

Cotter, though, was not for turning. When asked to explain himself, he said simply “16 tackles, no misses” in reference to Hardie’s performance on his debut, a win over Italy in Turin.

Since that day such stats have become commonplace. Against Japan the 27-year-old even outdid prop Alasdair Dickinson’s tally of 16 with a remarkable 21 tackles while also scoring what turned out to be a game-changing try when Scotland were labouring at just 12-10 ahead.

After a head knock kept him out against the USA and South Africa, Hardie injected some backbone into the Scots during a worrying, wobbly win over Samoa, rightly winning the Man of the Match award for a

performance of epic bravery. And then came a sublime display against Australia where he and Cowan – called in as an injury replacement for Grant Gilchrist mid-tournament – dominated the breakdown and slowed Wallaby ball in a way that neither England nor Wales had been able to.

“Growing up, Australia was always the team you used to watch,” laughs Hardie. “There used to be harsh rivalries between us and them, but everyone who plays Aussie wants to beat them and everyone finds it tough – we certainly did at Twickenham.”

The man who was partly responsible for Hardie’s northward migration watched the drama of the quarter-final against Australia – a controversial late penalty condemned Scotland to a 35-34 loss – unfold on TV back in the New Zealand hamlet of Dipton, a speck on the road between Queenstown and Invercargill.

Grant Hardie, John’s elder brother, had spent time playing in the small Borders town of Peebles, just south of Edinburgh, had loved his time there and had encouraged his little brother to take the plunge. While Grant stayed back at base tending the family’s sheep farm, parents Russell and Helen left New Zealand for the first time to follow their other son’s World Cup progress.

At first, Hardie had nothing much to report to his parents about his new adventure with Scotland. Cosseted by Cotter and keen to prove to

himself and his new team-mates that he could exist outside of “my comfort zone at the Highlanders”, for whom he had played 53 times in Super Rugby, Hardie just kept his head down, trained like an obsessive and let his rugby do the talking. As he said at the time: “You can say all you want but everything’s defined by your actions.”



**Heartbreak** Scots after the late defeat by Australia

in a Scotland shirt in an August friendly and without ever having played a game north of Hadrian’s Wall, Hardie was duly named in the Scotland World Cup squad at the expense of the incumbent Blair Cowan and the cause célèbre of Scotland fans, John Barclay. Not that it went down well. Former Scotland

**“I’VE LOVED IT. IT FEELS REALLY COMFORTABLE”**

## FACT FILE

**Age** 27 (27 July 1988)  
**Born** Lumsden, NZ  
**Club** Edinburgh  
**Position** Flanker  
**Height** 6ft  
**Weight** 16st 3lb  
**Scotland caps** Five (2T)  
**Twitter** @hardhorse44



### JOHN'S STANDOUT PLAYERS

#### SCOTLAND

"WP Nel played well throughout the tournament, was really consistent and scrummaged very well, especially against Australia."

#### REST OF THE WORLD

"I played with Fumi Tanaka (right) at the Highlanders and he was fantastic for Japan, a livewire."

"It feels really comfortable. I don't get nerves, I just feel more part of the set-up now. I've loved these last two months. The boys have been really good. Quarter-final of a World Cup, playing at Twickenham. Who would have thought that would happen six months ago? It's pretty surreal."

Hardie signed a two-year deal with Edinburgh after the World Cup, describing the chance to

stay in Scotland as a "privilege" and joining up with the club after a holiday with his girlfriend, the New Zealand netball player Hayley Crofts.

One of the first things he will do now he is staying in Scotland is visit grandma Lumsden's Fife birthplace and then some golf awaits (he was in single figures by the time he reached his teens), but he'll have to follow the progress of the harness racehorses he owns in New Zealand on his computer. After that there are always more worlds to conquer, not least a Lions tour to New Zealand in 2017. **RW**







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# HOME NATIONS

# REPORT CARD

**ENGLAND****IRELAND****SCOTLAND****WALES**

The World Cup wasn't kind to the home nations,  
but did they still make the grade or should they  
don the dunce's hat? *RW* gets out the marker pen...



NAME

ENGLAND

CLASS/YEAR

2015

SUBJECT *gold star*

**Youth** is England's trump card. They had the youngest squad at this World Cup (average age 26.2) and that means nearly everyone should be in contention for Japan 2019, with Mike Brown the only current regular who has already passed the age of 30.

Brown featured highly in the attacking stats at this tournament and can provide leadership and experience among the young backs around him for the Six Nations. The likes of George Ford, Anthony Watson and Jonathan Joseph are sublimely gifted attackers around whom England should build a game plan – don't forget, the team scored 18 tries in this year's Six Nations.



On their knees  
England have  
work to do

SUBJECT *Room for improvement*

Youth is one thing, **experience** another. England must land in Tokyo with a team battle-hardened by years of Test rugby. They averaged 24 caps a man across their RWC squad; contrast this with the semi-finalists, New Zealand (48 caps), South Africa (42), Australia (41) and Argentina (39) – the four highest figures at the event.

The **captaincy** should be looked at. Not for the first time, Chris Robshaw's decision-making – rejecting a kick at goal that could have earned a draw with Wales – proved flawed. A fresh voice would help give England a new identity and in the absence of obvious contenders it's time to share the armband. The 2003 champions contained eight men who had led England, so appoint different captains for different games and let's see who shows the right mettle. Ben Youngs, Joe Launchbury or Dylan Hartley, whose disciplinary record of three cards in 66 Tests isn't as bad as painted, could get first dibs.



The way forward  
Henry Slade should start

SUBJECT *in detention*

**Selection** was a shambles. Two of the four centres, Sam Burgess and Henry Slade, made their debut a fortnight before the squad was announced. Burgess wasn't ready and Slade wasn't trusted, hence, after Joseph's untimely injury, the untried defensive selection against Wales.

Slade must play. As a proven 10/13, he's already used to making front-on tackles as well as side-on ones, and he'd offer extra playmaking skills and a left-footed kicking option, à la Matt Giteau. A Ford-Slade-Joseph midfield, with Owen Farrell off the bench, would be great to watch and any defensive vulnerabilities can be addressed – look at what Phil Larder achieved with Will Greenwood.

The **breakdown** needs a rethink. England's ruck efficiency was better only than Uruguay, Namibia and Italy at the RWC and their six turnovers a game was also in the doldrums. The lack of a conventional ball-winning No 7 was a gamble that failed, and the time has come to see whether England can produce the quicker ball they need by deploying a genuine 'fetcher'. The famed Back-Hill-Dallaglio back row all started as opensides, and those skills served them well for their entire careers.

Matt Kvesic merits another chance, Will Fraser is worth a look. Robshaw's work-rate gives him the edge over Tom Wood, who, though a good lineout operator, was too indisciplined at this World Cup.

England's **scrum**, usually their foundation, deserted them when they needed it most. Their 82% success was embarrassing, and only Namibia and Uruguay conceded more scrum penalties. A front-row shake-up is needed.

## SIX NATIONS XV

- 15 M Brown
- 14 A Watson
- 13 J Joseph
- 12 H Slade
- 11 J May
- 10 G Ford (above)
- 9 B Youngs (c)
- 1 J Marler
- 2 D Hartley
- 3 K Brookes
- 4 J Launchbury
- 5 C Lawes
- 6 C Robshaw
- 7 M Kvesic
- 8 B Vunipola

## OVERALL

E



NAME

IRELAND

CLASS/YEAR

2015

SUBJECT *gold star* ★

Ireland have no trouble winning the ball – or keeping hold of it. They topped the **possession** stats during the World Cup, one of only two teams to average more than 20 minutes a game, South Africa the other. They also averaged more passes (192) than any other side and enjoyed a 97% ruck success rate.

Their **lineout** functioned superbly as they won 98% of their throws, with Rory Best back to his best. Their scrum held up well until the Argentina game, although Cian Healy, thrust back in after neck surgery, struggled at times and his bullocking runs were notably absent. The impressive Jack McGrath should start come the Six Nations while his Leinster colleague finds his form.

The **kicking out of hand** of Johnny Sexton and Conor Murray is the best of any half-back combination in the world and while it can be an overused tactic, when done well it brings great territory gains.

SUBJECT *Room for improvement* ✎

While Ireland had plenty of possession, it's what they did with it that was the problem. Their restrictive game plan drew some criticism for being dull in the Six Nations and the World Cup showed they lack a **creative edge**. They are seen as a team that don't like to take risks, but to win consistently against the southern hemisphere



Luke good  
Fitzgerald scores

teams they need to broaden their attacking approach. Kicking (only the Boks kick more from hand) might win titles in Europe but not on the global stage.

New Zealand had similar pass and carry numbers during the World Cup but they scored nearly twice as many tries as Ireland in their first five games – 34 to 18. The All Blacks also made double the amount of **offloads**, with Ireland's average of six joint lowest with the USA.

Ireland have the players to be more threatening with ball in hand; Joe Schmidt just needs to give them the freedom to do so. With Tommy Bowe injured for the Six Nations, give Simon Zebo a run of games on the wing; he scares defences. And move Luke Fitzgerald to 13 – he added a spark when coming on early against Argentina, so bring him closer to the action.

SUBJECT *In detention* ☹

Okay, let's get the mitigating circumstances out of the way first. Ireland were extremely unlucky to lose key

Hands up  
Devin Toner  
wins a lineout



## SIX NATIONS XV

- 15 R Kearney
- 14 S Zebo (above)
- 13 L Fitzgerald
- 12 R Henshaw
- 11 D Kearney
- 10 J Sexton
- 9 C Murray
- 1 J McGrath
- 2 R Best
- 3 T Furlong
- 4 I Henderson
- 5 D Toner
- 6 P O'Mahony (c)
- 7 S O'Brien
- 8 J Heaslip

## OVERALL

C+

men Johnny Sexton, Paul O'Connell and Peter O'Mahony in their last pool game. Had they been fit, and Sean O'Brien not banned, who knows how the quarter-final would have played out. They weren't available, though, and a major failing has to be **lack of depth** in the squad.

Sexton was far and away first-choice fly-half, but if Ian Madigan was viewed as the number two, why wasn't he given more game time at ten in recent years? Not just for Ireland but Leinster too. Kieran Marmion is the man to compete with Conor Murray at nine and Paddy Jackson is another ten option, but they need game time to ensure they have the requisite experience come RWC 2019.

On the same lines, they must find a successor for rock Mike Ross at tighthead. Start the project with Tadhg Furlong from this Six Nations onwards and Martin Moore can provide competition when fit.

One final point: Ireland have still never won a World Cup knockout game. Yes, they were hindered by injuries but their defence fell apart against the Pumas and the players' **mental strength** must be looked at as well.



Top three  
Tadhg Furlong



NAME

SCOTLAND

CLASS/YEAR

2015

SUBJECT *gold star*

Scotland have a **back-line** that can cut loose. Yes, you read that right. With a ten like Finn Russell chancing his arm and a cabal of adventurous young centres, headed up by the bright-eyed and brighter-heeled **Mark Bennett**, they have the temerity and naïvety to score tries against major opposition. It also helps that winger

Bright spark  
Mark Bennett



Tommy Seymour is in one of those wonderful grooves where the ball seems drawn to him whenever he is near the opposition try-line. At the moment the Glasgow Warriors speedster is a bit like the pedestrian who found a £2 coin on the pavement and promptly spent it on a winning scratchcard.

In their pack the Edinburgh **front row** looks like one that has evolved to finally go toe-to-toe with the big boys in Tests and in the second row the defensively prolific Gray brothers put out more hits than the Kray twins.

SUBJECT *Room for improvement*

Whenever we witness an **opposition kick-off** there is the feeling that Scotland could drop the pill. Picture the scene: Scotland have scored to eke out a lead in a big Test and as the ball hurtles towards them from a restart, they misjudge its flight, lift a pod too far forward and a wandering loonie knocks it on, in behind the jumpers. It almost cost them dearly against Samoa in what



Need a lift  
Kick-offs  
are a worry

ended up as their most important World Cup pool game and when the side do manage to catch the ball, there is always a faint whiff of panic as the half-backs realise they must use their exit strategies.

There is a lingering doubt about their **lineout** as well – will this be the one where it sails over the top, straight into the arms of the opposition's star player? Scotland have enormous targets to hit, but whenever there is an aspect of play where players get lifted, situations they should be able to bank on, they can be struck by a dizzying spell of vertigo... and fear of the ball.

That can be improved upon with practice and a swelling in confidence. One thing Scotland must work hard on now, though, is finding a **back-up** for their fine front row. Because at the moment the replacements are a step behind the front-liners. Auditions are open!

SUBJECT *In detention*

There is still that lingering hint of **insecurity** with Scotland that could be eradicated if they can just beat a team above them in the World Rugby Rankings, in a major tournament. They will always have a hefty chip on their shoulder, but Scotland haven't pushed a bully into the wood-chipper yet.

## SIX NATIONS XV

- 15 S Hogg
- 14 S Maitland
- 13 M Bennett
- 12 M Scott
- 11 T Seymour
- 10 F Russell
- 9 G Laidlaw (c)
- 1 A Dickinson
- 2 R Ford
- 3 WP Nel (above)
- 4 R Gray
- 5 J Gray
- 6 J Strauss
- 7 J Hardie
- 8 D Denton

## OVERALL

B

Broken  
David Denton



The reason they haven't taken a big scalp in the Six Nations or World Cup under coach Vern Cotter is because although the side have put in the performances, as shown against Australia, they don't possess the true winners' **mindset** yet. They need bloody-mindedness if they are to stop losing close Tests. For a blueprint, look at South Africa closing out their physically exhausting game against Wales in the last minutes of their quarter-final. Scotland could have beaten the Wallabies if only they had used boring front ball in their ultimate lineout, backing themselves to win it and sit on it.

Scotland must finally kill off their persona as the hard-done-by upstarts if they are to take the next step.



NAME

WALES

CLASS/YEAR

2015

SUBJECT *gold star*

Wales' **back row** is a match for any. Between them, Sam Warburton, Taulupe Faletau and Dan Lydiate made 160 tackles and will be 31, 28 and 31 respectively in 2019 – at the peak of their powers. With Justin Tipuric and Ross Moriarty as back-ups, it's a huge area of strength. In the second row, Alun Wyn Jones further reinforced his reputation as one of the world's premier locks.

In the backs, **Dan Biggar**, who turned 26 during the tournament, emerged as a world-class general at No 10, kicking brilliantly from hand and off the deck, while driving Wales on. Rhys Webb's understudy Gareth Davies grew into the shirt with five tries in as many games. However, what surpassed Wales' individual performances was their collective spirit in adversity with seven front-line backs injured prior to and during the tournament. They refused to moan and, if anything,



Back-row beef Sam Warburton inspired again

that misfortune made them an even tighter group. Warren Gatland and his staff must take credit for that.

SUBJECT *Room for improvement*

Wales' crisis in the back-line uncovered a **paucity of creativity** in the squad and it hurt them. The injuries were staggering. At outside-centre, they lost Jonathan Davies, Scott Williams and Cory Allen, and had they reached the semi-finals, they'd have been without Tyler Morgan, who dislocated his shoulder against South Africa. Wales scored eight tries against Uruguay but only four further tries in four games, albeit against some of the tournament's strongest teams.

In mitigation, with a fit Webb, Jonathan Davies, Leigh Halfpenny and latterly Liam Williams, you'd have backed them to have enough composure and invention to cross the whitewash when they needed to against South Africa and Australia – even when the latter were down to 13 men. A telling stat was that only one Wales player was in the top 20 for metres carried –



Titanic at ten Dan Biggar



## SIX NATIONS XV

- 15 L Williams
- 14 H Amos
- 13 J Davies
- 12 J Roberts
- 11 G North
- 10 D Biggar
- 9 G Davies
- 1 G Jenkins
- 2 S Baldwin
- 3 S Lee (above)
- 4 AW Jones
- 5 L Charteris
- 6 D Lydiate
- 7 S Warburton (c)
- 8 T Faletau

## OVERALL

B+

George North with 253. Gatland said Wales' decision-making under pressure would come under scrutiny.

SUBJECT *in detention*

The Welsh **scrum** was destroyed by the stronger packs. They gave away five scrum penalties against England, who had their own scrummaging issues, and Fiji also got the nudge on them. It improved slightly against Australia and South Africa but never convinced.

Samson Lee will become one of Europe's dominant tightheads, but he was rushed back to fitness after an Achilles injury and never looked up to speed. His deputy Tomas Francis, whilst willing, still has much to learn. Was Adam Jones retired too early? We'll never know but Robin McBryde has plenty of work to do.

**Alex Cuthbert** had a tortuous tournament. Struggling through a loss of form, the Lions wing was forced into action due to the weight of injuries, with Hallam Amos and Eli Walker among the casualties. It was clear Cuthbert's confidence was shot and he must refind his game domestically. RW



Frailty The Welsh scrum

PICS: ACTION IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES & INPHO



# THE MAKING OF RABAH SLIMANI



Tensions can run high in the multicultural Paris suburb of Sarcelles – but it also has a thriving rugby community that produced a France prop. We went to find out more...

WORDS: GAVIN MORTIMER // MAIN PICTURE: JAMES CROMBIE/INPHO

# S

**SARCELLES WAS** in the headlines a fair bit in the summer of 2014. In June *Midi Olympique* published an article about Rabah Slimani, the prop who had just made his first Test start on France's tour to Australia. It charted his "atypique" path to the national squad, beginning with his joining the Sarcelles club in the north of Paris.

The following month Sarcelles was back in the news, this time on the front pages of the world's press. A pro-Palestinian riot had turned violent and a mob had ransacked a number of Jewish shops and attacked a synagogue. "What happened in Sarcelles is intolerable... is quite simply anti-Semitism, racism," said France's



Prime Minister Manuel Valls. It wasn't the first time that Sarcelles' Jewish community had been targeted; in 2012 a kosher grocery was damaged in a grenade attack by Islamic militants, a terrorist cell subsequently caught.

No surprise, therefore, that Sarcelles is a place to avoid in the eyes of most well-heeled Parisians. It's one of →

▲ **Road to the top**  
Slimani scores at RWC 2015 and (right) kids train at Sarcelles





→ those suburbs that has sprouted on the outskirts of the French capital; in the case of Sarcelles, about six miles north of the Stade de France.

Yet despite its reputation, the people of Sarcelles are proud of their town. Most of them, be they Jewish, Catholic or Muslim, aren't interested in religious conflict and simply want the best for themselves and their families. For the parents, many of whom are African immigrants, that means seeing their children integrating into French society and being accepted.

This is why Sarcelles rugby club is at the heart of the local community. They don't care what colour your skin is, or whether you worship in a mosque, church or synagogue. What matters to club president Bruno Balluais is attitude. "As you can see there are kids here from all backgrounds training together," he tells *Rugby World* during our visit. "There's no talk of religion and never any problems with religion."

The boys and girls just want to play rugby. For most, it's a sport they knew little about growing up. Football rules in these parts and Paris Saint-Germain shirts are practically de rigueur for the youth. The ignorance extends to the parents, presenting a challenge to Balluais. "There is sometimes resistance from parents because they don't know anything about rugby," he explains. "They think it's violent and so it's our job



▲ Guiding figure  
Sarcelles U18 coach  
Yohan Ouaratta

relegated to Fédérale One (the third division) in May. In effect, Massy is the bridge between a club such as Sarcelles and professional rugby. Two players who have crossed the bridge recently are Sekou Macalou and Judicaël Cancoriet, both of whom played for France in this year's Junior World Championship.

Having started out as juniors at Sarcelles, the pair – both flankers – graduated to Massy and in the summer signed their first pro contracts, Macalou with Stade Français and Cancoriet with Clermont. "He's got great potential," says Stade coach Gonzalo Quesada of Macalou. "We're putting a lot of emphasis on developing our academy squad. Macalou is a great athlete and someone I think will do very well here."

Cancoriet returned to Sarcelles during the summer to watch the club's annual schools festival. "The kids do a bit of rugby at school throughout the year (schools don't play competitive sport in the French education system) and in June we organise a big tournament here for 1,500 kids by age groups," says Balluais. "That allows us to try to recruit players and it's an opportunity for children to join us and play more. It's how Rabah Slimani started."

When Cancoriet showed up in June, he spoke to some of the kids, presented a few trophies and told a local newspaper that Sarcelles had been like a "second family to him" between the ages of eight and 15.

Balluais understands what he meant. "A lot of kids who join the club have never had many rules in their lives. They come from large families, their parents work long hours and so they can pretty much do as they please. They come to us, discover rules and discipline, and actually quite like that. At the end of each training session we lay on a hot meal for the kids, which we eat together in the clubhouse. So the parents gradually start

"WE TELL KIDS THEY'LL  
LEARN NOT JUST ABOUT  
RUGBY BUT ALSO LIFE"

to show the positive aspects, that in fact rugby has a lot of rules and requires discipline and teamwork."

Yohan Ouaratta agrees. Now 26 and the coach of the U18 squad, he joined Sarcelles in 2004 and played in the same junior team as Slimani. "It's pretty difficult to attract kids from the housing estates," says Ouaratta, who plays for Sarcelles' first XV. "It's a pretty depressed area but we tell the kids, and their parents, that they'll learn not just about rugby but also about life. It's about respecting others and having the self-discipline to turn up to training and arrive at matches on time.

"I think that's particularly true for our club with so many players coming from quite tough backgrounds. Personally speaking, rugby has helped me a lot to be who I am today with a good job outside rugby."

Balluais is the type of selfless servant every amateur club needs. His association with Sarcelles stretches back 40 years, when he started playing for the juniors, and since hanging up his boots as a senior, he's been treasurer, secretary, vice-president and, for the past 20 years, president. "Obviously the biggest change in that time has been professionalism," he says. "Before 1995 players always stayed at Sarcelles, never thought of progressing beyond the club. That's the reason we established a partnership with Massy (in July)."

Massy are a semi-professional club in the south of Paris, who played in Pro D2 last season but were





▲ **Success stories** Pacome Zohouri (left) with Judicaël Cancoriet (Clermont) and Jocelyn Vaz-Tavares (Stade Français)

to see us as a positive influence on their children and as a good way to integrate into the local community.”

The process hasn't been without issues. In October 2013 a match between Sarcelles U16 and a visiting team from Senlis turned ugly, a story that was seized on by a French press never averse to stigmatising a suburb such as Sarcelles. Balluais had to explain what had happened: that at the end of a bad-tempered match, some Sarcelles players had phoned their friends from the estates and told them to come to the ground. An ambush was laid by about 30 youths and then sprung as the Senlis players left the clubhouse to board the bus home.

The FFR banned the Sarcelles U16 team for a year and though the local mayor condemned the punishment as “completely disproportionate”, Balluais makes no attempt to excuse the behaviour of those concerned.

Nor does Pacome Zohouri, who's played for the Ivory Coast and is the director of Sarcelles' rugby school. “Part of our job is to educate kids about how to behave on and off the field,” he says. “They are proud of where they come from and are aware of the image of their suburb. But we need to keep educating them in how to take pride in playing for Sarcelles but not fighting for it. I believe we've made a lot of progress. Players who do go on to bigger clubs keep their strong attachment to us.”

Slimani, who went from Sarcelles to the Stade Français Academy, keeps in contact with his old team-mates and visits whenever he can. Last year he told *Midi Olympique* that a decade earlier rugby was a sport no one in his family knew anything about. “I had to really insist to my parents that they take me to training,” he recalled.

There are scores of other young ‘Slimanis’ in Sarcelles today, youngsters who are skinnier than one of his thighs but who draw inspiration from what he's achieved. It's unlikely that 15-year-old Mohammad Toure will grow into a Test prop, but the threequarter is quick to cite Slimani as his favourite France player. Like his hero, Toure was born in Sarcelles and comes from a family with no rugby lineage.

“But I'm happy to have discovered rugby because it's a sport that matches my character,” he says. “I've got a strong character so I like the contact in rugby, the tackling and hits. That's one of the reasons I took it up.”

Ouaratta recalls that Slimani's exceptional talent was evident from the moment he picked up a ball. He may have been a little overweight but he had the skill to play where he wanted – fly-half, full-back or back-row. Who knows how many more of Sarcelles' youngsters will make the same journey as Slimani; perhaps in a few years Macalou or Cancoriet will be capped by France, or one of the kids running around on the night *Rugby World* visited. Either way, Slimani has bequeathed something of inestimable value to Sarcelles – hope.

“He's a great example for kids from the local estates,” says Ouarratta. “They see him in the French team and they know that with hard work and talent it's possible to get to the top regardless of your background.” **RW**

▼ **Community work** Kids of all backgrounds at Sarcelles and (bottom) their ground, Stade Nelson Mandela



PICS: GAZETTE DU VAL-D'OISE & JAMES MULHOLLAND

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2015 WORLD CUP  
HEADLINE MAKERS

# IAIN HENDERSON

Paul O'Connell has left a vacancy in Ireland's engine room – and this Ulsterman can fill it

**T**HE FACT Iain Henderson has a penchant for napping is well known since his room-mate Paddy Jackson posted a video of the lock sleeping during the World Cup. There was nothing dozy about his performances during the tournament, however.

Try-scorer against Canada, Man of the Match against Italy and able deputy for Paul O'Connell against France, Henderson was Ireland's standout player at RWC 2015. He's been involved in the squad for three years now; his ball-carrying and tackling were always notable attributes but it's the improvement in his game understanding that has most impressed Joe Schmidt.

"Iain's always been a super athlete, but he is starting to match his athleticism with his understanding," says the Ireland head coach. "That allows him to deliver on more elements of the game. His lineout



Athlete  
In the gym

understanding has improved, he has the ability to add value at scrum time, is visible as a ball-carrier, and defensively he is capable of physically stopping people."

That last point was evident in the France game when Henderson, on at half-time to replace the injured O'Connell, drove Bernard Le Roux back several metres. He couldn't make the same impact a week later against Argentina as Ireland fell at the quarter-final stage once again, but he does look to have cemented himself as O'Connell's long-term

## IAIN'S STANDOUT STATISTIC

### 21 METRES

The average ground he made per match during the RWC – more than any other lock bar Fiji's Leone Nakarawa

successor. Not that he'll be trying to imitate his former captain.

"Players are selected to do what they're capable of," the 23-year-old says. "You've got to be confident playing your own game and not try to do something you're not used to doing or be someone different."

Henderson is a little different as it is. He spent one particular day off during the World Cup looking at grass on a farm in Buih Wells with Rory Best. The reason for the trip? To see how "rotations of livestock on areas of grass maximise efficiency of growth from a plot of land".

It's clear Henderson is able to switch off from the pressures of professional rugby. He's been the focus of plenty of hype over the last few months and admits he would prefer to "go under the radar", but there's little chance of that now the rugby world has woken up to his talents. **RW**

## FACT FILE

Age 23 (21 Feb 1992)  
Born Craigavon  
Province Ulster  
Height 6ft 6in  
Weight 19st  
Ireland caps 23  
Test points Ten (2T)  
Twitter @Hendersonlain



# AGUSTÍN ORMAECHEA

The Uruguay No 9 talks RW's Sarah Mockford through the ups and downs of his first World Cup

**A** GUSTÍN ORMAECHEA joined a few exclusive clubs during the World Cup. First, he became one of half-a-dozen players at the tournament to follow in their father's footsteps by playing in a Rugby World Cup. Then, when scoring against Fiji in Milton Keynes, he and dad Diego joined the Nalagas – Kavekini (1987) and Napolioni (2011) – as fathers and sons to have scored tries in a RWC match.

The other group is probably one he'd rather not be part of, though. A red card against Fiji made him one of only 12 players to score a try and be sent off in the same Test match.

He nearly created a unique record after initially being named Man of the Match for that game too – social media users voted for the scrum-half after what they viewed as a harsh red card, the result of a second yellow for tussling with Fiji prop Campese Ma'afu. Organisers obviously felt it



**Nosing in front**  
Threatening v Australia

would be inappropriate for him to receive the gong, though, and awarded it to Fiji's Leone Nakarawa instead. At least the disciplinary committee cleared him to play England four days later, deeming the sending-off punishment enough.

It all amounted to something of a bittersweet experience for Ormaechea – but the good far outweighed the bad and he now has World Cup stories of his own to share with his father. "That game did leave mixed feelings, but the World Cup was everything I hoped for and

## AGUSTÍN'S STANDOUT PLAYERS

### URUGUAY

"Rodrigo Silva hasn't played wing too much, but he's done it at this level and been incredible for us. He's young and studies agriculture."

### REST OF THE WORLD

"I really enjoy watching Japan play and their No 15, Ayumu Goromaru, is outstanding."

more," he says. "It was an incredible experience and I'll remember it for the rest of my life."

Ormaechea, with his slick service and tenacious attitude, was the heartbeat of a Uruguay team unfortunate to find themselves in the 'Pool of Death'. They always knew wins would be out of their grasp when playing Wales, Australia, Fiji and England, but they avoided the 100-point scorelines many predicted and notched two tries against Fiji.

Ormaechea is hopeful that being part of the World Cup – their first involvement since 2003 – will help Uruguayan rugby develop further.

"We don't get to play many games like that, in a World Cup, so we gave it our best," he says. "We have a lot of young players and they loved it, and I could feel us growing a lot. That was the main objective we had before the World Cup – to grow our game – and I'm really happy we achieved that." **RW**

## FACT FILE

Age 24 (8 March 1991)  
Born Montevideo  
Club Stade Montois  
Height 5ft 11in  
Weight 13st 12lb  
Uruguay caps 27  
Test points 117  
(5T, 16C, 20P)





# AYUMU GOROMARU

The Japan full-back talks physical challenges, fishing and the future with RW's Rich Freeman

**B** ACK IN 2005, I wrote a match report for a newspaper in Japan that read: "Daisuke Ohata may be the pin-up boy of Japanese rugby but 19-year-old Ayumu Goromaru is the face of the future." Ten years later, he proved me right, becoming one of the stars of this year's World Cup.

After the Brave Blossoms' final RWC 2015 match – a victory over the USA making Japan the first-ever team to win three games and not reach the World Cup knockout stages – he said: "Everyone on this team is a hero."

It's Goromaru, though, who has captured imaginations in Japan. Team mascots are now incorporating his kicking routine into their displays; kids are clasping their hands together in the playground; footballers have been adopting the pose before taking a free-kick or penalty.

Japanese rugby is suddenly very big news – but it hasn't always been the easiest of journeys for Goromaru. He started rugby young, joining a rugby school at the age of three with his older brother, Ryo, who is now a hooker with Coca-Cola Red Sparks. He also played football at primary school – "I played every position but goalie," he says. With rugby, though, he soon settled in at full-back after a brief run in the centres.

Having left the southern island of Kyushu for Waseda University in Tokyo, Goromaru won his first cap as a student in 2005. But four years of playing his peers rather than being



**Smash hit** Tackling Tommy Seymour into touch

tested in the Top League – as is the rule in Japan – saw his development hindered and he struggled during his first season as a professional.

He wasn't picked for the 2007 or 2011 World Cups, but his career got a new lease of life when Eddie Jones replaced John Kirwan. Jones not only made him one of the first names on the team sheet but ensured he was part of the leadership group.

"I never really saw myself as a leader," Goromaru admits. "But Eddie just told me to do what I do, keep playing and lead by performance."

He certainly did that in England, winning two Man of the Match gongs. And he could quite easily have had a third – Fumiaki Tanaka getting the nod for his performance in the win over South Africa. He says: "I always thought we could be the team of the tournament. I knew we had the ability and I know how hard we trained."

When asked to describe the five-month training camp Jones put them through, he says: "It was physically the toughest thing in the world. Only the Japanese team could have been so resilient. I did question it at times but I see why we did it. All the success we've had is down to the players and staff

that have been with us over the last four years. Everyone's contributed."

Away from rugby, Goromaru spends many an hour fishing for amberjack and dreams of catching a giant trevally in Okinawa's tropical waters. "I also want to go fishing in Australia. Scott Wisemantel (former Japan assistant coach) has promised to take me but he's in France at the moment."

With his new-found fame, Goromaru may have to put the rod and tackle on hold. And while he doesn't always appear comfortable doing interviews, he is determined to put it to good use. "Because of the impact we have had I want to do something to help Japanese sport. We need to get rid of the bukatsu system," he says, referring to the school club system whereby kids join one sports team while at junior high and high school, then do just that one sport all year.

The other thing he wants to do is teach kids to develop their own way of doing things. While admitting that Jonny Wilkinson influenced his own kicking style, Goromaru says children should simply do what feels natural to them rather than copying others.

Ask which full-backs he admired as a child and he admits he generally watched what a flanker did and that being named in a Top League All-Star side alongside George Smith was one of his greatest honours. "They're the ones who put their body on the line and contribute most to the team."

Anyone who saw Goromaru play at the World Cup would understand that philosophy – especially Scotland's Tommy Seymour, who wrote the tweet of the tournament after being tackled by the Japan full-back.

"Finally managed to get myself to Leeds. Took a little longer than the rest of the lads after Goromaru sent me 3 counties over with that hit."

A gauge of Goromaru's impact on the tournament in 140 characters. **RW**

## AYUMU'S STANDOUT PLAYERS

### JAPAN

"Michael Leitch is a huge asset. The way he plays and leads gives the team confidence and courage. If he can do it, we can do it."

### REST OF THE WORLD

"Richie McCaw physically expresses what it means to be a leader. Even when the game is won, he is there making tackles."

▶ **Leading role**  
McCaw is the world's most-capped player

**Trendsetter** Kids copy his kicking stance





## FACT FILE

Age 29 (1 March 1986)  
Born Fukuoka  
Club Yamaha Júbilo  
Position Full-back  
Japan caps 56  
Test points 708  
(18T, 162C, 98P)  
Twitter @Goro\_15





2015 WORLD CUP  
HEADLINE MAKERS

# GARETH DAVIES

The Wales No 9 has taken his try-scoring exploits onto the world stage. By RW's Owain Jones

**J**UST 13 days before the opening ceremony, Gareth Davies's World Cup fortunes changed irrevocably with a serious injury to Wales' first-choice No 9 Rhys Webb. For the Scarlet, who had waited patiently as Webb blazed a trail across Europe, the cruel twist of fate gave him the chance to prove his worth on the world stage – and he took it with both mitts.

Davies played all bar ten minutes of Wales' campaign, which ended at the quarter-final stage, and scored five tries in as many games to become the joint top-scoring scrum-half in RWC



history with 1987 World Cup-winning captain David Kirk. When informed of the record, he laughs: "Are you serious? What happened at the World Cup is only just starting to sink in."

## THE FACTS

Age 25 (18 Aug 1990)  
Born Carmarthen  
Region Scarlets  
Height 5ft 10in  
Weight 13st 12lb  
Wales caps Nine  
Wales points 25 (5T)  
Twitter @Gar\_Davies9

The Pro12's top try-scorer in 2013-14 with ten, Davies etched his name in folklore with a 70th-minute try against England. "That was the highlight of my career so far. The ball was running on in front of me and I thought, 'Bloody hell, I could get to this'. The kick from Lloyd (Williams) was inch perfect."

As he's not yet in double figures caps-wise, did the coaches give him special attention? "They reviewed my performance after each game, and Rob (Howley) gave me pointers. They just said back myself and be confident."

# LOOD DE JAGER

He may have a baby face but this giant lock has been bossing it for the Boks, writes RW's Alan Dymock

**W**HEN VICTOR MATFIELD picked up an injury, two games into the World Cup, a question came up: who would call South Africa's lineout? A quiet figure put his hand up. Lood de Jager, the cherub-faced, 22-year-old Cheetah, had no problem running the lineout and partnering Eben Etzebeth at lock.

Little may have been expected of the young second-row pairing but they thrived together, with de Jager snatching plaudits along the way. As one World Cup-winning Bok lock points out, big Lood has never had a problem grasping the nettle.

"Rugby is all about using your opportunities," says Kobus Wiese, South Africa's No 4 in 1995 and now a commentator with SuperSport. "Lood got an opportunity out of the Varsity Cup, a relatively new

competition in our country that has been going for a couple of years but that is growing. They very quickly recognised Lood's talent and invited him to Springbok training camps.

"He's everything you want in a lock. He's mobile, he can play a physical game, he gets his lineout ball, he brings firepower to the scrum. That's why I believe that between him and Etzebeth, they are the lock pairing of the future for South Africa, barring injury."



**Free range**  
Running against Japan

Not that the man himself is as bullish. He is less willing to take praise and more prepared to insist that South Africa missed a golden chance in this World Cup, losing by two points to New Zealand in the semi-final at Twickenham. He is also thankful for any leg-up.

"I'm grateful for the opportunities that I got. But it's not about me, it's about the team," says de Jager.

"Hopefully I can play a few more Tests for South Africa and maybe another World Cup. Hopefully it goes better next time."

"It's been an immense privilege and honour to play with (senior) guys. Victor, Schalk, Fourie, Jean. Guys who have had a big impact on my career and I've learnt a lot from them."

"I just want to wish them luck and thank them for the memories we had together and for all the times they helped me." **RW**



**Impact** Hitting Julian Savea

## THE FACTS

Age 22 (17 Dec 1992)  
Born Alberton, Gauteng  
Franchise Cheetahs  
Height 6ft 9in  
Weight 19st 9lb  
South Africa caps 19  
SA points 20 (4T)  
Twitter @LooD\_Jager



**Line dance**  
Scoring against South Africa

## GARETH'S STANDOUT PLAYERS

### WALES

"Taulupe Faletau's work at the base, defensive game and ball-carrying were superb."

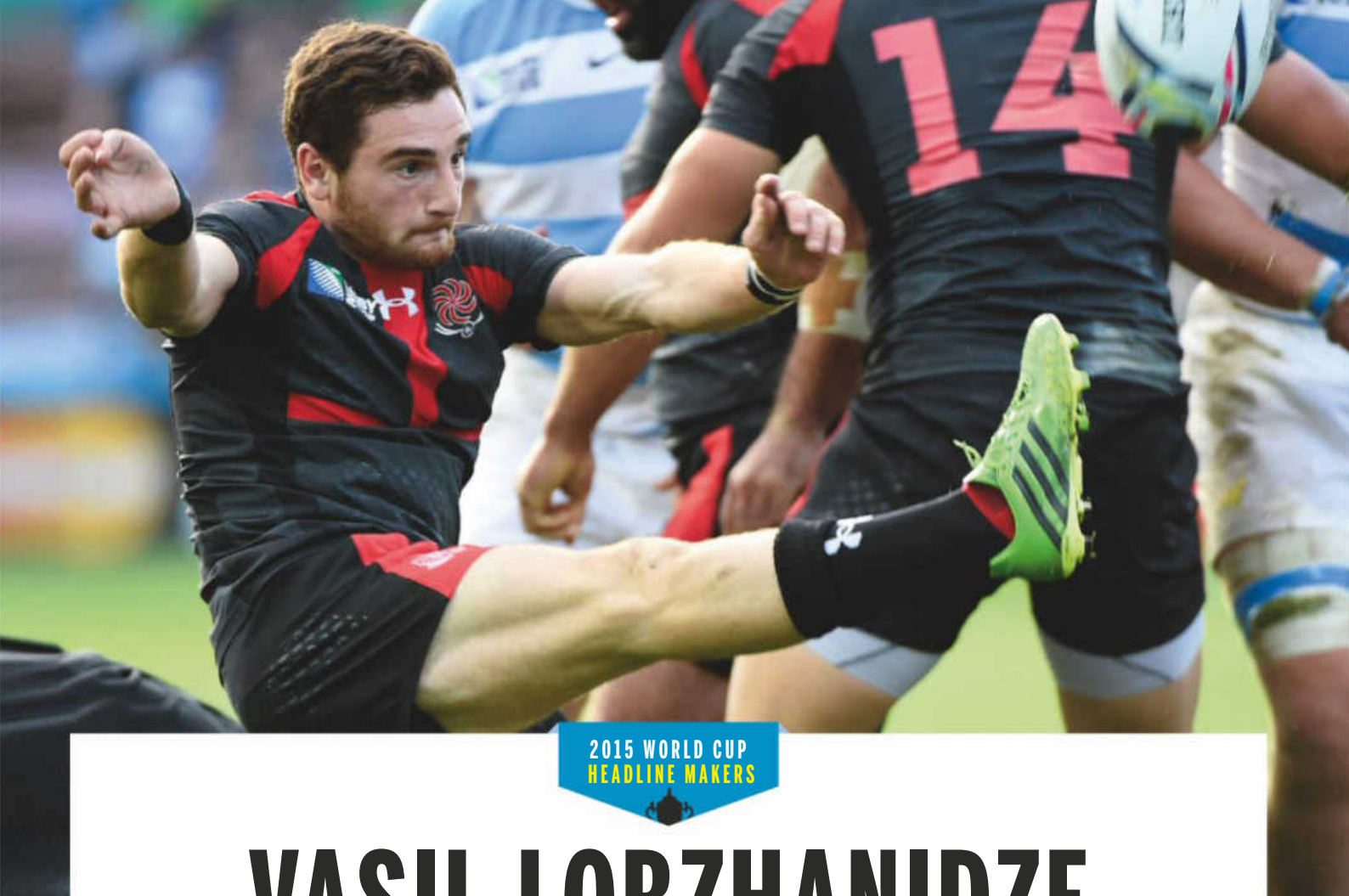
### REST OF THE WORLD

"Julian Savea was unplayable at times. His second try against France was awesome."

The tournament also allowed him to pit his wits against some of the world's most influential No 9s. "Ben Youngs is a superb player and plays in a similar style to me, whereas Fourie du Preez and Will Genia always seemed to make the right decisions. People were saying Fourie was getting old, but for me he was one of the most influential players at the tournament."

After some downtime with his British bulldog, Pete, he's eager to help the Scarlets maintain their strong start to the season. "There's no time to look back!" **RW**





2015 WORLD CUP  
HEADLINE MAKERS

# VASIL LOBZHANIDZE



The Georgia scrum-half has been living a teenage dream. RW's Sarah Mockford reports

W

HAT A year it's been for Vasil Lobzhanidze. The scrum-half made his Test debut for Georgia in February and

helped them to five European Nations Cup wins. In May he was a leading figure as his country won the World Rugby U20 Trophy in Lisbon to qualify for next year's Junior World Cup. Then he became the youngest player to play in a World Cup, taking the field against Tonga in September – by now as Georgia's first-choice No 9 – aged 18 years 340 days.

By the end of the tournament, he'd helped Georgia to wins over Tonga and Namibia, meaning they qualify automatically for RWC 2019, and been nominated for World Rugby's Breakthrough Player of the Year gong.

Collective achievements are far more important for the teenager than individual accolades, however. "For me the main goal wasn't to be the youngest player but to win two



In a spin Passing in the 17-16 win v Namibia

matches," says Lobzhanidze. "I'm the happiest person now because we've achieved that ultimate goal."

Lobzhanidze admits he would never have imagined being part of Georgia's World Cup campaign three years ago and even his coaches have been surprised by the speed of his progress.

"He's outstanding and continues to amaze the coaches," says Milton Haig, Georgia's head coach. "We brought him in for the ENC campaign to get him in the squad and help his understanding, so that we could take him to the World Cup as our third

VASIL'S  
STANDOUT  
PLAYER

#### REST OF THE WORLD

"The Argentina wing Santiago Cordero. We didn't know much about him and he performed very well."

scrum-half. He played really well and started doing things the coaches didn't think were possible!

"We knew he'd be good but we didn't know he'd be so good. He's a natural footballer – the closest to a New Zealand nine that we've got – and he'll be a superstar."

The good news for Haig and Georgia is that Lobzhanidze is determined to keep improving. He took note of Aaron Smith's performances during the World Cup and plans to model his game on the All Blacks No 9.

"For me, the goal is to play at the top level," he says. "My attitude is if you reach your goal, whatever it is, you just have to carry on. You have to strive for more – to do the maximum to become a better and better player."

With plenty of time on his side, expect to see Lobzhanidze pulling the strings for Georgia for years to come. **RW**

#### FACT FILE

Age 19 (14 Oct 1996)

Born Tbilisi

Club Armazi

Position Scrum-half

Georgia caps Ten

Debut v Germany, 2015

SUPREME



PROTEIN

# KINGS

CREATED BY INTERNATIONAL RUGBY PLAYERS



GETTY

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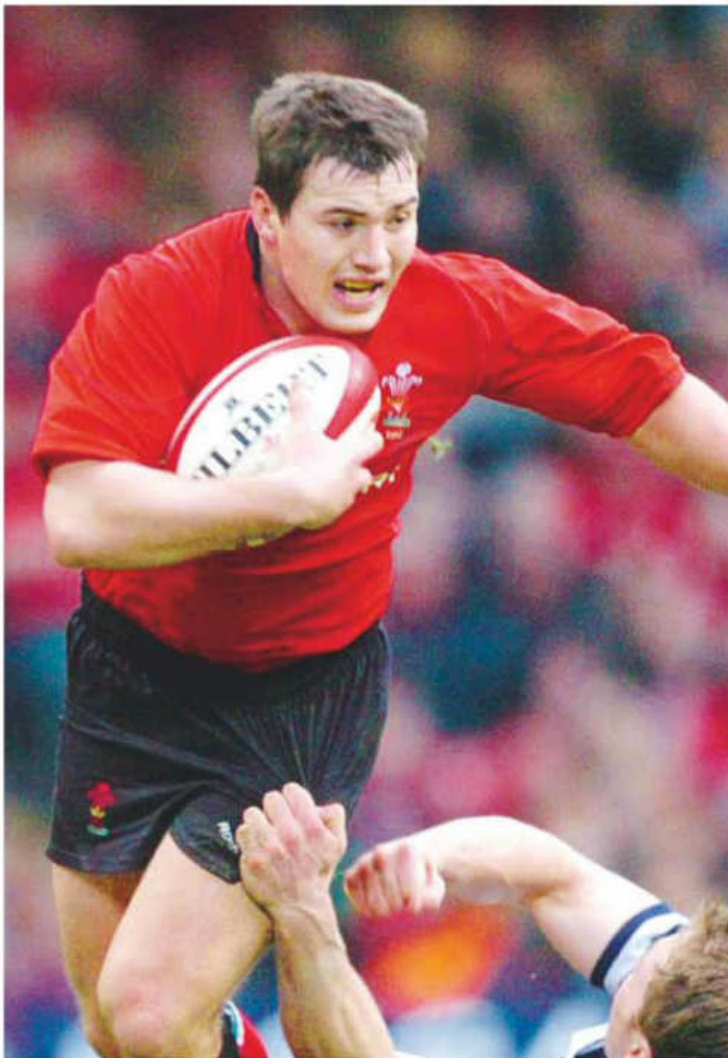
# STEPHEN JONES

RUGBY'S MOST OUTSPOKEN AND INFLUENTIAL JOURNALIST



## “The love affair is over”

Union must stop searching for the next league convert, argues Stephen Jones



**O**NE OF the worst parts of covering the Rugby World Cup, that triumphant few weeks when rugby was in the sky with diamonds, was the Sam Burgess issue. At the time he was picked in the England squad above the likes of Luther Burrell, I wrote that it was the most infamous selection made in English rugby history and I have no reason to revise that view.

Burgess had a tortuous World Cup. He basically got in the way of preparation and play, and he was so fawned upon by elements of the England coaching staff that he had a whole new series of key performance indicators. If he made two big tackles and a couple of passes in a Test it was suggested that he had been quite outstanding. Stuart Lancaster himself once told us that he had run really good lines off the ball. For goodness sake.

The gory fate of so many cross-code players has never put union off, never made it sit down and discuss the cost of so many transfer disasters. The love affair must now be over. It never amounted to much in the first place.

What is the criteria for success if you are signing a big-name player from rugby league? It is surely that the transferred player performs appreciably better than a

promising union youngster, because if he does not, then what is the point of shelling out money on a big contract? You simply play the union youngster, upon whom you have to waste little time because he already knows how to ruck and maul and tackle, and because he already knows all of rugby's angles.

By that standard, 95% of code converts have been a shambles. About that number have gone scuttling back to whence they came; think Chev Walker's short stint at Bath and Benji Marshall's ill-fated mini spell at the Blues in Auckland – he made just one start and six appearances before returning to league. A few, like Lesley Vainikolo and Joel Tomkins, won caps that they palpably did not deserve. Iestyn Harris played 25 times for Wales but never truly convinced and he headed back to league to play and coach. Brian Carney went to RWC 2007 with Ireland just a few months after switching codes but didn't play a single minute.

People always single out Jason Robinson as a success, but he was a freak. He had a sporting intellect which enabled him to grasp the game as if it was innate to him. The only player in the current British and Irish game who has been a success from the scores who have come over is Kyle Eastmond, and he was as unfortunate as Burrell in not making the

▼ **Code crossers**  
Harris, Burgess,  
Carney & Marshall





→ World Cup squad. Union is a wickedly hard game to learn and Eastmond has buckled down and grasped all its new angles, tactics, laws and defensive systems.

One more observation about Burgess. Just over a week after England were eliminated from their own World Cup, we saw Argentina play Ireland in Cardiff. Here we saw magic because that day Argentina played rugby from the gods. The midfield trio of Nicolás Sánchez, Juan Martín Hernández and Matías Moroni were sublime; they had all the talents. They dovetailed perfectly, all set off by the monumental all-round game of the great Hernández. If you compare that trio with the Farrell-Burgess-Barritt triumvirate who appeared for England against Wales, you have chalk and cheese.

Yet it was horrible to cover because you understood that Burgess is essentially a decent man and, in his former code, an outstanding player. Like many converts, he did not have the raw pace to trouble any defenders but it was in many ways a situation not of his own making when he sank without trace. Presumably, he did not knock on any doors begging to be chosen. He should have been a project for the 2019 World Cup and the fault lies with the coaches for picking him so prematurely, when he had yet to find his feet in union. We all hope and pray that if he stays in this code, he will be well looked after in the superior environment at Bath and re-emerge as a well-respected rugby union player.

The only good news is that the game will now be far more wary. My suggestion that the RFU set up a hybrid team of league and union players in the North of England, to compete in one of the slightly lower national leagues and give everyone who wishes to switch codes a one- or two-season induction, went down extremely well in high positions at Twickenham. But to bring a player over out of the blue and throw him in too early is just too draining on time and resources, with so very little chance of success.

Rugby league is a funny arena and always has been. Before union went professional, league based all its excuses on the union game. League's spectacular failure to spread in any meaningful form in the UK from its original base hugging the M62 has been one of the



▲ **Falling short**  
Joel Tomkins won three England caps in 2013

disasters of all sporting history in any sport. Even now, after so many years, it will be fascinating to see what happens on the day when Sky Sports no longer wish to show it because if you took away the platform in terms of finance that the loyal TV deal gives then you have a game blown to smithereens. They have no significant contracts or sponsorships in any form.

But the reason why they needed union as an amateur game was as an excuse for all this. Rugby union's laws effectively banned players who went to league. This is paraded as some form of discrimination almost on a par

with the apartheid system in South Africa when in fact it was union merely using the only weapon it had, since it could not pay players to stay.

I still have scores of newspaper cuttings from

league apologists demanding a level playing field with union, prepared to battle with a professionalised union game. I remember thinking that battle could only end one way, and it has. In fact, it was barely a battle, so obvious was the outcome, and so one-sided.

Union has slaughtered league for spectator appeal, commercial appeal, vast global spread and especially in audience numbers, at grounds or on TV. Paying attendances for the World Cup pool stages amounted to more than the total crowds in a Super League season. There is no harm in the landlocked code's fans claiming that theirs is the better game because, presumably, if they did not think so they would not support it. However, in terms of the overall victory, the world has voted with its feet in a ratio of roughly 5,000:1.

And all the attempts to launch professional league teams outside the old northern triangle have been miserable failures. London Broncos, the only flagship in the south, has been sunk so many times that the lifeboat people must be knackered.

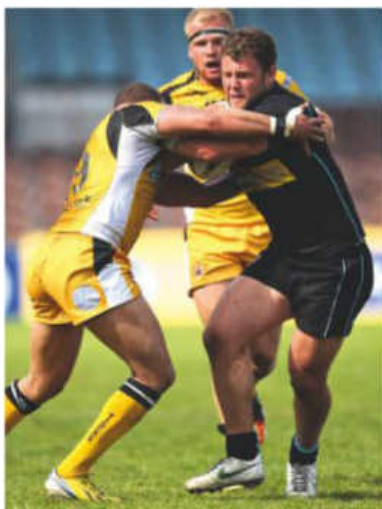
Not long ago I read a decent book by someone called Dave Hadfield, a rugby league writer. He had the perfect answer to the terminal lack of appeal of the London Broncos. He hinted that people would come in their tens of thousands to see the Broncos play; the only problem was the London traffic, which made it so difficult to get to their various grounds.

You wondered how 80,000 supporters of Saracens could possibly have managed to get to Wembley and

## BRINGING A PLAYER OVER OUT OF THE BLUE IS JUST TOO DRAINING



▲ **Learning a trade** Bath's Kyle Eastmond, here splintering the Wasps defence, has adapted his game well



▲ **Crowd trouble** Broncos have low crowd numbers

how Harlequins are almost always close to sell-out for their home games in south-west London. Maybe union fans have their own personal underground system. The truth is that people don't like league.

The ingenious means by which self-justification comes around are even more inventive. Stuart Maconie, who is some form of entertainer, recently wrote an article in a big newspaper about the superiority of league. It was straight off the shelves of *Monty Python*, as he described his dislike of the "snobbish grammar school" where he once lived and spoke of the "rougher streets of north-west England". No doubt that the rest of the UK was delighted to learn that there are no rough streets in Newcastle or Leicester or Northampton or Cardiff or Swansea or Newport or Gloucester or Bristol.

His theory for the demise of league was the lack of "establishment acceptance". In other words, he had not moved on one single step from the hoary old rubbish associated with the split in the two codes in the 19th Century. He – and an incredible number of other observers – still see it as a class war between the codes.

The idea that union is simply an upper-middle class sport is utter bilge and always has been, and I would

love to be present when Maconie, in the course of his research, wanders round Cornwall and the Forest of Dean and South Wales and the Scottish Borders and the Midlands and even the south-east of England to accuse rugby's participants of being middle class. Rugby union is a far more welcoming sport to all classes and creeds than league will ever be. Gareth Thomas, the Wales great, encountered homophobic abuse after he came out – in league. Maconie's most optimistic effort is to claim that league TV audiences were four times as big as that of union. He later announced his membership of the Flat Earth Society!

From league, the union code has had a fantastic coach in Phil Larder and arguably the finest specialist coach the union game has seen for decades in Shaun Edwards. But the success of Edwards is instructive. When he came over, he had no belief that simply joining union allowed him any airs or graces or arrogance. He knew that he was entering a vast, new and bigger world, and he had the humility to roll up his sleeves and learn a game more difficult to play and far more difficult to coach at elite level.

The Edwards example is one that should be followed if any recruiter in the future thinks that a league player or coach has any intrinsic superiority. The reverse snobbery of the likes of Maconie, after all, is one reason why league lacks the humility to expand itself. Union should make the split bigger. **rw**

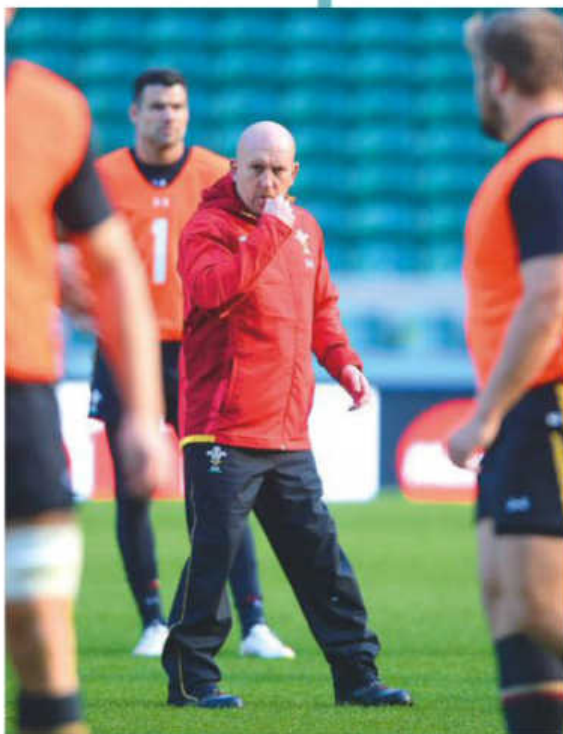
## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Tell us your views.

Email: [rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com)

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▲ **League of his own** Shaun Edwards has proved a revelation as a union coach



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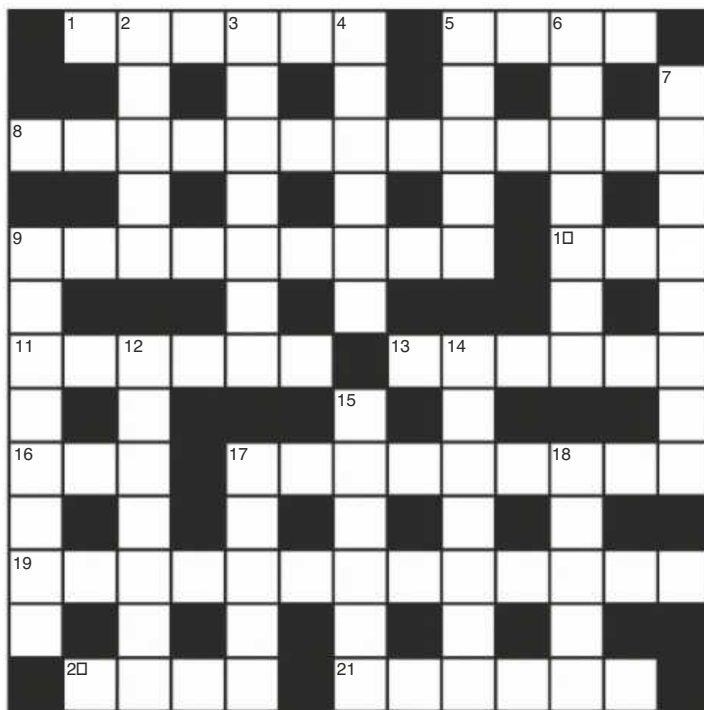
# CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- 1 Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho likened physical - - - star Diego Costa to a rugby player (6)
- 5 Shontayne - - - , dual international who retired in 2014 because of multiple concussions (4)
- 8 He has coached at three World Cups - as an assistant with France in 2003 and 2007, and as Italy's head coach this year (7,6)
- 9 Thrillingly rally once for hat-trick scorer at RWC 2015 (4,5)
- 10 - - - and Dec, TV double act who were in the crowd for England v Fiji (3)
- 11 Ran hard - to please Shaun Edwards? (6)
- 13 Spookers - - - Park, New Zealand attraction where visiting Chiefs players got a fright! (6)
- 16 Scott - - - , Wallaby who some view as the world's best loosehead (3)
- 17 His magnificent kicking helped Wales upset the odds at HQ (3,6)
- 19 Second-row who scored the first of Argentina's seven tries against Georgia at Kingsholm (5,8)
- 20 Between them, Scotland's - - - brothers made 94 tackles in the pool stage of RWC 2015 (4)
- 21 Abrasive England and Lions lock who became a citing officer (6)

## DOWN

- 2 - - - Duran, Uruguay front-row with a touch of Hollywood about him (5)
- 3 Brewery that sponsored the first English national leagues (7)
- 4 The be-all and end-all in professional rugby (6)
- 5 2009 Grand Slam winner who is now a player development officer for the Irish players' union (5)
- 6 Protein - - - , popular snack at Harlequins - and not just on Shrove Tuesday (7)
- 7 "He's quick for an - - - " Graham Rowntree said of Nick Easter (3,5)
- 9 In 1988 he became the first England player to score a hat-trick at Twickenham since Herbert Jacob 64 years earlier (5,3)
- 12 Cape Town-based player has a cracking game (7)
- 14 City in which USA last year lost 74-6 to the All Blacks, their fourth-heaviest Test defeat (7)
- 15 Bank worker Santiago Vilaseca took two months' - - - leave to captain Uruguay at RWC 2015 (6)
- 17 - - - Hare, former Leicester and England points machine who scouts for Northampton Saints (5)
- 18 Andrew McDermott edited the official World Cup one (5)



### THE WINNER OF THE OCTOBER CROSSWORD IS WESLEY SELKRIDGE FROM ALTRINCHAM, GTR MANCHESTER

**ACROSS** 1. Nic White 4. Eddy 8. Tea 9. Sligo 10. Pen 11. Michael 12. Itoje 13. Black and red 17. Truro 18. Glasgow 20. Age 21. Innes 22. Ear 23. Katy 24. Cabannes. **DOWN** 1. No time 2. Craic 3. Thiel 5. Diprose 6. Yanked 7. Colin Deans 9. Sean Cronin 14. Laurent 15. Attack 16. Swords 18. Genia 19. Green.

The crossword winner will receive a case of the legendary **Hobgoblin ruby beer**, from the Wychwood brewery ([www.wychwood.co.uk](http://www.wychwood.co.uk)). Like them on Facebook - Hobgoblin beer. The closing date for entries is Friday 4 December. Results will appear in our February 2016 issue. Send your entries and address to: Rugby World Crossword, 7th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London, SE1 0SU. Full competition rules are on P42. Entrants must be over 18. **Compiled by Alan Pearey.**



## DON'T MISS NEXT MONTH

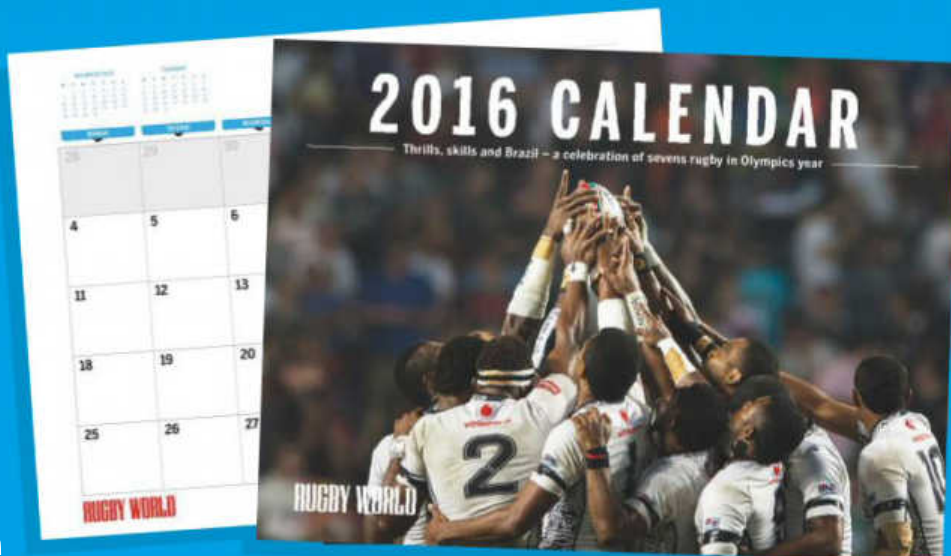
# SEVENS 2016 CALENDAR

Celebrating sevens in Olympics year

## PLUS

- ▶ Big-name interviews
- ▶ Grass-roots clubs news
- ▶ Technical advice
- ▶ Sensational photos

## ON SALE TUE 8 DEC



Make sure you pick up Rugby World's January edition!



# RUGBY FOCUS

A round-up of news from the clubs, sevens and women's circuits



PIC: MATT THEREENS

ONLY IN  
RUGBY  
WORLD

## Team of the Month Stavanger

**B**RINGING THE thunder' is an expression you can easily imagine Wallaby Nick Cummins using, but it's actually the motto of his brother Nathan's club – Stavanger in Norway.

Nathan moved there three years ago with his Norwegian fiancée and is one of a number of expats who have helped Stavanger win back-to-back Norwegian Premiership titles. In fact, they haven't lost a domestic sevens or 15-a-side game in two years.

Fly-half Cummins is also head coach and,

alongside captain Adam Jones, he encourages a fast-paced game that suits their lighter pack.

The strong expat community is down to Stavanger being the oil and gas capital of Europe. Wing Alex Smith says: "Many expat players don't have family in Norway, so the club becomes their family."

It's not all about the expats. Some of the locals have been at the club for 20 years, like wing Kristoffer Borsheim, who recently became Norway's most-capped player with 51 appearances.



### CONTACT

Email your club's news stories and photos to *Rugby World Clubs* Editor Michael Austin at [aus231@aol.com](mailto:aus231@aol.com) or call him on 01400 282 189.

Stavanger secured this year's title when overcoming nearest rivals Bergen 16-0 in early October, having beaten Oslo 18-17, Trondheim 67-0 and Tønsberg 45-3 in September.

Club president Dominique JP Duc says: "We basically empowered the players and became an organisation applying the values of rugby to our work and not vice versa."

Stavanger are our first Team of the Month for 2015-16 and **win 23 Apatchy bootbags** (left). If you think your side merits the October award, email [rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com](mailto:rugbyworldletters@timeinc.com) to tell us why. Include a high-res pic.





# Sinfield's eager to earn his stripes

Yorkshire Carnegie's new boy tells RW's Katie Field why he's crossed codes

**Y**OU ARE 35 years old. You have played top-class rugby league for 19 years, led your club to 15 titles and captained your country at a World Cup. You even have an MBE. What is your next move? Put your battered body out to pasture and get a 'proper' job, knowing you can dine out on those special memories for the rest of your life? Or put your hard-won and absolutely matchless reputation on the line by taking up a new sport?

Kevin Sinfield has chosen option two, so the man held in god-like esteem in the world of rugby league – especially at Leeds Rhinos – is now a member of the Yorkshire Carnegie squad. Explain yourself please!

"It's a challenge I really wanted to take on. I'm a big union fan – I always have been – and I wanted to have a go before I hang my boots up," Sinfield says. "I have probably been thinking about it for ten years and I don't think I'd have had another opportunity to play professional rugby union if I didn't do it now. I had a gut feeling it was the right time and I like what is happening at Carnegie."

Leeds Rhinos share a ground and training facilities with Carnegie but they are run as separate clubs, so when the union bosses offered Sinfield an 18-month contract to start on 1 November, he had to negotiate a release from what should have been the last year of his Rhinos' deal in 2016. The approach was made around this time last year, the transfer was announced in the spring, but Sinfield then had to play one last league season. And what a season it was, as he captained the Rhinos to the treble of the League Leaders' Shield, the Challenge Cup and a win in last month's Super League Grand Final.

"It was difficult when I couldn't talk about the move for seven months, but it was only right that my focus was on the Rhinos. In the back of my mind I was thinking about coming to union."



## QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Name** Kevin Sinfield  
**Nickname** Kev or Sinny  
**Age** 35 (12 Sept 1980)  
**Born** Oldham, Lancs  
**Position** Fly-half  
**Married?** Wife Jayne. Sons Jack (11) and Sam (seven)  
**Rugby league honours** 14 GB caps, 26 England caps  
**Personality** Laid-back, honest. I can be perceived as reserved, but when you get to know me I'm different  
**Last book read** I'm reading *The Iron Curtain* by Phil Larder and Nick Bishop. Phil taught at my high school before I went there  
**How you switch off from rugby** Spend time with the family. I love watching our two boys playing sports  
**Surprising fact** I have just finished a Masters degree in Sports Business

► **You're welcome!**  
 Sinfield shares a joke with his new team

His change of code will present challenges, but he is still surrounded by familiar faces at Headingley and didn't need a guided tour! "A lot of people who have gone through this transition have moved house and they are not only dealing with getting

to know a new sport and new team-mates and understanding new patterns and systems, they also have to integrate their family and support network into a new environment," he says.

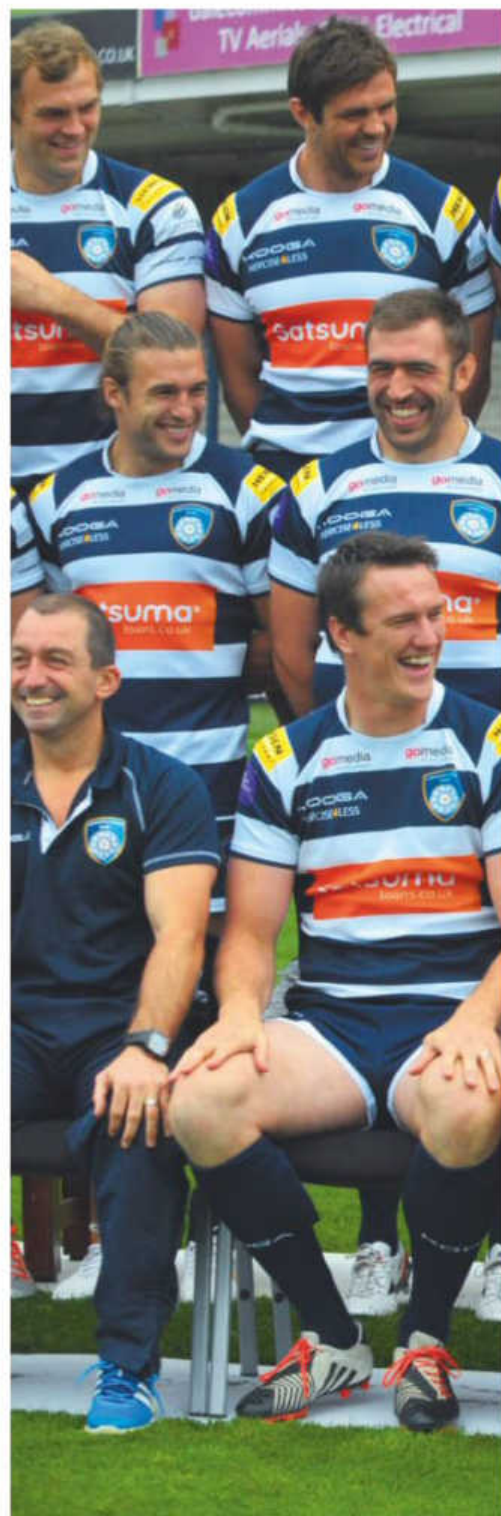
Carnegie coach Bryan Redpath is planning to play Sinfield at fly-half. "The skill-set required to play stand-off in rugby league is quite similar to fly-half in union so that will help with the transition," says Sinfield. "I have a great deal of learning in front of me and I need to play – that's the best way to learn the game. I don't want to sit on the bench – I'm too old for that."

He began his union education by doing video analysis with Redpath before starting training and he has an idea of the areas of the game he will find trickiest.

"Possibly the breakdown, although there's been that many rule changes in recent years, maybe the fact I'm coming in fresh without any bad habits will help!" he laughs. "Defensively I'll have to get used to not retreating ten metres. The challenge of the whole thing is something that's really sparked and excited me."

Ask league fans and players about Sinfield's qualities and they will talk about his work ethic, mental toughness, leadership, discipline and attention to detail. He is intelligent (three A levels, a BA and a Masters) and is an accomplished goalkicker too, so there is no doubt this diamond from the 13-man code will add to Carnegie's riches.

"The skills I have will complement the things already in place. I'm hoping to play a small part in helping us be



successful. It's a competitive league but Carnegie got off to a decent start and if I can add something – brilliant.

"But I will need to learn from these guys. More so now than I've ever had to in my career, I've got to use every part of me to try to make things work."

All the hoopla about Sam Burgess's first year in union hasn't put Sinfield off: "I look at all the players who have switched codes and take inspiration and guidance from each of them. I'm a big fan of Sam and I know he will come through with flying colours."





### CHILDHOOD RUGBY HERO

Ellery Hanley. He was the best player I ever saw. He had a fantastic skill-set and he always delivered


### RUGBY FUNNY

Rob Burrow put a load of the little paper circles you get from a hole punch in the air vents in Kylie Leuluai's car. When he turned the blowers on they blew everywhere. He's still finding them now

### CAREER HIGHLIGHT

Winning the treble this year. It was a great way to finish. Fantastic. There was just relief at the end of the Grand Final

Now Sinfield is looking forward to getting some game time in Carnegie colours and he hopes many Rhinos fans will come to Headingley to cheer him on. "I made my debut for them in 1997 and the support I've had in that time has been incredible. I hope there will be some interest in what I'm doing and the project at Yorkshire Carnegie. Hopefully we can generate a bit more interest and the best way to do that is to have a successful team."

If anyone knows how to make that happen, it's Sinfield. 



## NEWS ROUND-UP

**OFFICIAL GUEST** RWC final referee Nigel Owens is the guest speaker at Rotherham Titans' Christmas Dinner on 17 December. Tickets are £35 and proceeds will go to Help for Heroes – see [rotherhamrugby.co.uk](http://rotherhamrugby.co.uk)

**LATU'S GONG** Doncaster back-row Latu Makaafi won the first Greene King IPA



Championship Player of the Month award of the season, after scoring six tries in the Knights' first four league matches.

**BRISTOL BAN** Mitch Eadie (left) is serving a six-week ban after pleading guilty to physically abusing referee Ian Tempest during Bristol's win at Ealing Trailfinders.

**LUKE WHO'S BACK!** Luke Arscott has returned to Bristol from Bath on loan. The full-back has also played for Exeter Chiefs.





# Fleetwood bucks the trend for front-rows

The England hooker is now excelling in sevens. RW's Ali Donnelly reports

**V**ICKY FLEETWOOD'S dreams of being a professional player were so close to never happening that there are few England players who count themselves luckier.

A rare breed of front-rower who has the ability and pace to play elite sevens, Fleetwood turned down the chance to join the England Sevens squad a year ago, prioritising time with her family because her mother had been diagnosed with cancer.

"After last year's World Cup, Simon Middleton (England's head coach) asked if I'd have any interest in getting involved in some sevens sessions," she explains. "But my mum was ill so I said no and put it out of my head. That was much more important than what was just my hobby and I hadn't even considered the idea of being paid to play."

As her mother began the recovery process over the next year, Fleetwood felt her opportunity had passed but Middleton thought she could add something unique and, with Olympics qualification secure, he called on her again this summer. Fleetwood played in the European Championships, fell in love with sevens and performed well enough to be handed a full-time deal.

"It happened very quickly. I played tournaments in Russia and France and wow, the difference in the type of fitness was a huge reality check. I scored a try early in my first game and thought things were going well, then I looked at the clock and just a few minutes had passed. I was already knackered! But when the offer of a contract came, I didn't think twice."

Most know her as the dynamic hooker who was a star of England's 2014 World Cup win, but she started her career in the centre, where an athletics background helped her to develop a powerful running game. Her basic skills are in excellent nick, too, having taken up the game at 14 with her school. She says: "I started in the

backs because I had pace, but I'm not from a rugby background so had no clue what I was doing when I moved to Lichfield. Tash Jones, the fly-half, had to boss me around quite a lot."

The move to hooker came after her talent was recognised by England's coaching team, whose concerns about the lack of talent coming through in a vital position were enough to persuade her to shift.

"At first I said no. I had no interest in scrummaging but the coaches persuaded me that if I worked hard it would be better in the long run for my England chances so I moved. I was 17 and I'd never been in a scrum, never thrown the ball in and generally had no idea what the forwards did, but I looked at it as being more of an extra back-row."

Fleetwood watched from the sidelines as England lost the 2010 World Cup final, but vowed to herself that she'd be involved in the next one. A Test debut came on tour to Canada in 2011.

"I was rooming with Rocky Clark, which didn't ease the nerves," she recalls. "I only knew her from playing against her and she's a pitbull on the pitch, so I was a bit petrified. But off the pitch it was totally different and it was brilliant to get to know her and win my first cap. It made me more determined to get a regular place in the team."

Her rivalry with Emma Croker ever since has driven them both to become world class. They are regularly rotated in the first XV, though it was Fleetwood who got the nod in the 2014 final.

"Emma and I have pushed each other. We're in many ways similar players and have been rotated quite a bit depending on who is scrummaging well, throwing better and so on. Going into the World Cup she was probably considered the starter, so I had to fight hard to get that shirt."



## QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Name** Victoria Fleetwood

**Age** 25 (13 April 1990)

**Nickname** Fleeto

**Twitter** @vickyfleetwood

**Personality** Smiley, girly and quite shy!

**England debut** 2011

Nations Cup in Canada

**Day job** England Sevens player and personal trainer

**TV show** *Dinner Date*

**Best thing about being pro**

Doing what you love every day and still having time to rest and see family

**Favourite women's player**

Maggie Alphonsi. When I got into the game at a more serious level, she was one of the ones I looked up to – her knowledge of the game, her aggression in the tackle and how humble she was

**Embarrassing moment**

Knocking the ball on over the try-line at Twickenham

► **All-action hero**  
Fleetwood fends off Wales defenders



It's been a tough year for England since the World Cup. They finished fourth in the Six Nations and lost to New Zealand on a summer tour.

"A lot has changed for us," says Fleetwood. "We have a new coaching team who have new ideas and a lot of new players. There wasn't a lot of time together as a squad before the Six Nations and this summer the new coaches took over so we're still developing. This is a shorter World Cup cycle so there is a lot to do in a short time. I can see why people were



#### FAVOURITE BOOK

I can't remember the last book I read cover to cover, but I like a good autobiography. Lawrence Dallaglio's was a good one

#### RUGBY HIGHLIGHT

My favourite part of any game was Emily Scarratt brushing off half the Canadian team to score a try in the World Cup final

#### FAVOURITE MALE PLAYER

As a hooker, Schalk Brits has always been a player I'd love to play like. He's got pace, skill and flair

surprised we didn't do very well after winning a World Cup but it has been a massive rebuilding process."

As a contracted sevens player, Fleetwood isn't involved in any club rugby, though it's unclear if England's sevens stars will feature for the Test side. As for a shot at the Olympics, she isn't thinking too far ahead.

"By being in the squad, I have a shot at Rio but it's no more than that. It's massively competitive, not just within the England squad but from the Welsh and Scottish players involved now." **RM**



## NEWS ROUND-UP

**FRESH FACES** Wales' Laurie Harries (right) and Jasmine Joyce, plus Scots Stephanie Johnston and Megan Gaffney, have joined 19 English pros in the Team GB training squad for the 2016 Rio Olympics.

**GREAT EIGHT** Auckland won their eighth straight provincial title, beating Wellington



39-9 with lots of new faces. It's good news for Glenn Moore, the Blues forwards coach who's been named Black Ferns head coach.

**AUTUMN TESTS** England play France on 7 November in Martigues and host Ireland on 14 November at the Twickenham Stoop.

**BACK ON TRACK** Japan recovered from finishing third in the first event of the Asian Sevens to win the second leg in Sri Lanka, and with it the overall championship.





## FOCUS ON SEVENS

Braced for impact  
Werner Kok on the run

# "Dubai is special because it's neutral"

In this month's sevens section, South Africa's Werner Kok tells RW's Alan Dymock why he's excited about the start of the new HSBC World Series

**R**ETURNING TO Dubai means South Africa's Werner Kok starts this new HSBC Sevens World Series in the happiest possible way. Last year the Blitzbokke triumphed there and Kok was named in the Dream Team from that famous Emirates event.

"Each and every tournament is unique," Kok tells *Rugby World*, "but Dubai is special. I think it's because it's a neutral pitch. The fans there don't shout for a specific team – they cheer for big tackles, great passes

and good runs regardless of which team is making them. It's just great to see that neutrality from them."

So it's a top place to kick off the first of ten legs, with Dubai opening things up on 5 December and London closing the series on 22 May.

South Africa finished second in the series last season, having been in the driving seat for large parts of the campaign. They qualified for next summer's Olympics and Kok stood out as a star player. He was named in the HSBC Dream Team for the whole season, was the second-highest

ball-carrier, with 130 carries, and the top tackler with 116 hits. Chuffed?

"I'm happy with my performances," Kok says. "But I don't go very deep into those stats. I'm very positive about the value of being named in a Dream Team, but it puts pressure on you to be as good, if not going further, this season."

"I just want to be as good as Cecil Afrika! With his decision-making, he's always spot on and he is someone I have looked up to and respected for a very long time."

Kok doesn't believe that winning last year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow gives South Africa any edge in the upcoming Olympics and he's disappointed they didn't win the series last time out, losing out to Fiji. The Blitzbokke weren't clinical

## "I JUST WANT TO BE AS GOOD AS CECIL AFRIKA!"



### QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Name** Werner Kok  
**Age** 22 (17.1.93)  
**Birthplace** Nelspruit  
**Sevens debut** London 2013  
**Titles** Port Elizabeth 2013 & 2014, Dubai 2014, Las Vegas 2014





## SEVENS GALLERY

A look back at the last instalment of the Dubai Sevens

PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES




**Smile for the camera**  
South Africa celebrate and (below) fans enjoy the festivities



enough, he feels; they played some good rugby but they need to do more.

However, with such a challenge on the horizon, and baubles being awarded to the blond bombshell almost monthly, he must be raring to throw himself into a run of sevens and global events of huge magnitude.

"Winning the Commonwealth Games helps with our confidence, but does it put us in the driving seat for the Olympics? I don't think so.

"It's another awesome platform – it's the world's biggest sporting event! We must play with confidence and take every tournament by force. And not forget about the team; it's better to be part of a system. That's not a burden, putting an arm around team-mates. We're a small team so it makes my job easier." 

### SEVENS SURVIVAL TIPS

#### THIS MONTH'S TIP: PICK A COLOUR!

Dubai may have an appreciation of all sides, as Werner Kok suggests here, but that doesn't mean you should dress neutrally. Pick a side, any side, and wear their colours. Stand up and stand out!







## FOCUS ON CLUB RUGBY

# NATIONAL 1&2

A round-up of news from the National Leagues. Edited by Michael Austin



PIC: MALCOLM MOORHOUSE

### CLUB FOCUS

## HULL IONIAN'S

Winning promotion twice to National One – the second time last season – is the major achievement in the history of Hull Ionians, and this time they intend to stay. Formed in 1989 from the merger of Hull & East Riding with Ionians, they settled into the top five with a 38-35 win at Fylde featuring a hat-trick from Will Foden.

Spokesman Malcolm Knowles said: "We hope to finish in mid-table and achieve it in a way that doesn't burden the club financially." Alex Crockett, who played for Bath, Bristol, Newcastle and England Saxons, heads an experienced coaching team with Danny Paul, a newcomer from Yorkshire Carnegie, as his assistant.

Lock Joe Makin, 24, is in his fifth year as captain, while recruits include former Sandal centre Joe Allott, Emanuel Harmatiuk from Argentina, fellow lock Ed Falkingham, ex-Driffield, and wing Aquile Smith from Birmingham & Solihull.

The 270-plus youngsters in Ionians' mini-junior section can draw inspiration from ex-England wing Jon Sleightholme, who began his senior career there.

▲ **Hands off**  
Joe Sanders resists  
Hartpury College

**PITCH PERFECT** Loughborough Students and Rosslyn Park, of National One, are proud possessors of stunning 3G playing surfaces on their first-team pitches – the same as seen at Saracens' Allianz Park and Newcastle Falcons' Kingston Park.

Loughborough's features a green carpet finish, new posts and improved crowd hosting facilities. DoR Dave Morris said: "It should suit our style of play. As the first university side to be admitted to the RFU National Leagues and with our centenary only four years away, the new pitch should see Loughborough into a bright future."

Rosslyn Park's pitch caters for the club's mini section – totalling almost 1,000 – as well as their seven adult sides. It brought this reaction from DoR Shaun Justice: "It's an amazing facility. The amount and quality of rugby now being played on it is fantastic."

**DRY GOODS** A grant of £100,000 from South Oxfordshire District Council has helped Henley Hawks, of National One, to move nearer to their target of £775,000 for their clubhouse redevelopment project at Dry Leas. They've put together £210,000 and aim to raise £250,000 by January so the club can apply for funding from other grants.

**CARPO IN** Coventry have strengthened their squad with Romania No 8 Daniel Carpo, 30, who arrived at the Butts Park Arena after RWC 2015. He made his Test debut eight years ago and spent eight seasons at Steaua Bucharest before joining RCM Timisoara. DoR Phil Maynard said: "Daniel is a strong ball-carrier with plenty of experience."

Utility back James Tinncknell, who appeared in the Premiership for Yorkshire Carnegie and London Welsh, has increased options behind

the scrum. Tom Preece, a Scottish-qualified New Zealand back-row, has also arrived after signing from French club Saint Savin Sportif.

**SILVER POLISH** RFU president Jason Leonard opened Two South club Bishop's Stortford's £200,000 refurbishment at Silver Leys – and brought along the World Cup. The RFU provided a £10,000 grant and a £20,000 interest-free loan while Greene King contributed £60,000 for the new bar.

**HIGH SHERRIF** Shek Sherrif, 20, a lock from Sierra Leone, is sharpening the competition for places at Plymouth Albion. He stands 6ft 5in, weighs 17st and is studying for a sports development degree at the University of St Mark & St John in the city.

Sherrif took up the game only four years ago and has been gaining experience with Newton Abbot. He said: "I think I'm capable of making the Albion first team and I'll be in Plymouth for three years so I've got time."

**TOUCH OF CLASS** Liam Lawton, a try-scorer when Chester beat Birkenhead Park in the 2008 Intermediate Cup final, can't resist playing on. Now an O2 Touch coach, he has been chosen for the England Men's Over-35s training squad for the Touch European Championships in Jersey next year. He started playing touch a year ago when helping to create the Chester Cheetahs side.

**PEDAL POWER** Stourbridge DoR Neil Mitchell got on his bike to raise money for Paul Barker. Mitchell played in the second row with Barker, who had a leg amputated two years ago because of a rare form of bone cancer. Barker now needs a prosthetic leg and Mitchell joined other players and staff from Stourbridge in completing the 100-mile Surrey Classic Bike Ride that raised £3,000.

**PROP SWAP** It was one in and one out in the front row for Worthing Raiders. They signed ex-Wharfedale prop Tom Margetson but lost Josh Iguanokpe, a loan player from Harlequins, who moved to Clifton after enrolling at Bristol University. Coach Kieron Dawson said: "Tom is a good replacement."

**TOMMY GUN** Redruth prop Tommy Phillips has won the Tony Mead Memorial Shield as the Cornwall U20 Player of the Year. He joined the Two South club last season from Truro College, having been a product of Helston RFC. He toured Hungary last June with the England Counties U20 squad.

**DALE'S TALE** A welcome addition to the game's literature is *Riverball*, which tells the fairy-tale story of Wharfedale. Author Simon Ravens answers the question of how a small club in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales has spent 20 years in National One by following the team around the country for the whole of last season. In the words of RFU chairman Bill Beaumont: "It also paints a broader picture of our wonderful community game."

## SHORT PASS

Esher Golden Lions, sponsored by the Tobago Division of Tourism, will defend their International Sevens title at the tournament in Tobago on 5-6 December. The competition looks tougher this year with four teams from America, two from Canada as well as Aesculapians, also from the UK.



## FOCUS ON CLUB RUGBY

# MIDLANDS

A round-up of news from the Midlands region. Edited by Michael Austin

**STAR QUALITY** Bredon Star's new clubhouse scooped the innovation award at the North Midlands RFU Volunteer Reward and Recognition Evening. It cost £215,000 and turned over £42,000 in the first seven months after opening. Treasurer Adrian Bawden was named Volunteer of the Year having project managed the development that has given the Worcestershire club their first permanent home in 25 years.

**VENUS RISING** Nuneaton-based **Manor Park** beat Coventrians 29-0 in their first Four West (South) match under new head coach and club record try-scorer Kevin Venus. It also ended a run of 18 away games without a win stretching back almost two years.

It's a welcome return to **Ludlow**, of Three West (North), for Shropshire full-back Will Sparrow, who spent last season with National Two North Luctonians. Sparrow has kept his promise to end his playing days with Ludlow.

**TOUGH SELL** Stafford hope to obtain planning permission for a new ground despite more than 130 objections. The Two West (North) club have submitted plans for a clubhouse, car parking and pitches at Blackberry Lane. But nearby residents have raised concerns, including flooding risks.

**HANDLE WITH CARE** Bournville's Alex Warner faces a lengthy lay-off after badly damaging three fingers in a work accident. It happened when the fly-half, a carpenter by trade, was using an electric saw. His injury followed those on the pitch to James Whybrow, who fractured a collarbone, and Greg Moore, who damaged quadriceps.

**TWO FOR TOM** Hinckley's Tom Kilburn is among the 2,015 coaches recruited and trained to Level Two under the QBE Coaching Club programme in partnership with the RFU. Kilburn now has a qualification to coach the

## SHORT PASS

There's a brotherly twist at Market Rasen & Louth where prop Chris Starling has taken over as captain from his sibling Dave, a flanker. Under coach Rhuari Pike, they're targeting a rise from seventh place in One East.

U13 age group and above. He has since become the National Three Midlands club's coaching co-ordinator and said: "The course gave my training sessions a new spark."

**LADIES FIRST** Amber Valley, based at Somercotes, near Alfreton, proudly fielded their first women's team eight months after deciding to put together a squad mostly comprising those without any experience. They met a Barbarians side, chosen from more experienced local club players, and performed creditably in a 22-0 defeat.

**ROXY SHOCK** Roxy Fearon, Derby's head coach, described the 127-10 win over Old Laurentians, newly promoted to One East, as "surreal". He said: "I've never been involved in anything like that in my life before." Derby led by 43-10 at half-time before scoring 84 points without reply to finish with 19 tries.

**ART ATTACK** Old Saltleians picked up a national award for the most innovative project to raise awareness of the World Cup. The Two West (North) club staged a RWC-themed art exhibition and invited local schools and Brownie packs to submit entries. Almost 150 works of art were included in the display – the brainchild of Jack Rogers.

A three-hour 'Run the Ball' challenge, organised by **Melton Mowbray**, raised more than the £500 target for the Derbyshire, Leicestershire & Rutland Air Ambulance.

**TEAM EFFORT** Four Solihull clubs – **Camp Hill**, **Edwardians**, **Old Yardleians** and **Silhillians** – joined forces to promote the game in the town's Mell Square. They were already collaborating on initiatives to recruit players and were supported by Wasps and Worcester. "It's great to see professional clubs supporting events like this," said Camp Hill's mini-junior chairman Nigel Busby.

**VIZINTIN VISIT** A survivor of the Andes plane crash played in a touch tournament in **Birmingham** on the day before Uruguay's RWC match against Australia at Villa Park. Antonio 'Tintin' Vizintin was travelling with the Old Christians rugby team from Uruguay to Chile when their flight crashed in 1972.

Vizintin remains closely involved in rugby and was in Birmingham as a member of the Anjeos, a touring invitation team.

**NEW ROLES** Leek, of One West, have named prop Bobby Cheadle as first-team captain to succeed fly-half Gary McDermott.

New recruits as player-coaches at National Three Midlands club **Old Halesonians** are lock Ben Hughes and centre Ben Barkley.

**SAD LOSSES** Brian Head-Rapson, 81, who narrowly missed inclusion in England's international referees' panel at the peak of his career, is a sad loss for the **Notts, Lincs & Derbyshire Society**. **Stoke** are mourning stalwart John Evans, who had been first-team captain, colts manager and club president. 🐾



PIC: MICHAEL AUSTIN

## CLUB FOCUS

### BERKSWELL & BALSALL

Progress has been swift for Berkswell & Balsall, who were founded in 1981. They played on a school pitch, bought their own ground seven years later and then built their own clubhouse, which was opened in 2000. On-field development matched that off it. From the humble league beginnings of a tenth-place finish in Warwickshire Two back in 1988, they spent the past three campaigns in One West. B&B were relegated last season, a minor blemish on a picture of good health.

Half of the senior squad emerged through the mini-juniors, prop Nick Waite is in his third season as captain, head coach Adie Fahy has been with the club for 30 years and wife Lesley has been involved since 1982. She said: "I know what the club has been through to achieve what we have today." Son James is a first-team centre and daughter Katie helps with social events.

They are looking to increase the number of changing rooms to cope with girls' teams, have several feeder schools and are promoting tag rugby.

▲ **Captain's backing**  
Nick Waite supports carrier Jon Lowden v Stratford-upon-Avon





## FOCUS ON CLUB RUGBY

# LONDON & SE

A round-up of news from London and the South-East. Edited by Michael Austin

**BOOM TIME** Dartfordians have an extra league team in action this term, so increasing their competitive sides from four to five, plus a vets' XV. Chairman Jarrod Lawrence said: "All the work in the junior section is paying off. We've created a centre of excellence for three- to 18-year-olds, set up by minis chairman Andre Seguin, and we've accepted an invitation from the Kent union to be the regional hub of female rugby."

**HALL'S MARK** Fellow Two South-East club Ashford have appointed Darren Hall, a former Junior Springbok, as head coach. Chairman John Norman said: "We are looking to establish a more professional structure." There's also a change at National Three London club Guernsey – of name. They have become Guernsey Raiders.

**GROUP TRIP** New Zealand weren't the only All Blacks enjoying themselves at the World Cup. No fewer than 15 players from Burgess Hill, known as the Sussex All Blacks, watched Japan's famous win over South Africa at Brighton. With ten other players ruled out by injury or work commitments, the upshot was that the club had to call off their Three South-East game against Cranbrook.

In contrast, Brighton coach Neil McGovern went to the Japan game straight after seeing his side slip up 27-20 to Sutton & Epsom. But he did so ruing the win that got away. "Poor decision-making let us down," he admitted.

**NO PRESSURE** New Hastings & Bexhill coach Chris Brooks is happy to keep the expectation off his side after taking over from Kevin Smith. The former front-rower said: "We're adopting a no-pressure approach and will be happy with a top-four finish, but this is open to review as the season progresses."

**MOVING UP** Norwich, of Two North-East, are proud that prop Matt Selby and back-row Dave Micklethwaite have made the step up to Bury St Edmunds, newcomers to National Two South. DoR David Everitt said: "This is a great honour for them and we'll watch their progress. Both are hard-working lads and deserve this opportunity."

**WARNING BELL** Former Worthing Raiders flanker Simon Gaynor has joined promoted Horsham, who admit they face a tough time in Two South. "We learnt a lesson," said coach and former full-back Richard Bell after a 75-29 hammering at Tunbridge Wells.

**Gosport & Fareham** coach Neil McRoberts promised his side "brutal, physical" training sessions after they were defensively vulnerable in their opening games. "We need to beat the softness out of us," he said.

**MEAT MARKET** Sam Steggles, a Norfolk farmer and ex-Holt player, was surprised to be caught up in RWC euphoria by supplying goat meat for pies eaten by the Fiji squad. He said: "I just got a call saying there were a lot of hungry rugby players who needed our

help." Steggles's company also sponsors a youth team at Crusaders RFC in Little Melton.

**CLASSIC CARR** New wing Harry Carr enjoyed a sparkling first start for Havant in their 46-21 win over Twickenham in One South. Coach Will Knight said: "Before kick-off, Harry predicted he would get a hat-trick and that's exactly what he did. He's a silky runner and possesses real gas."

**WELCOME RETURN** Winchester were doubly pleased to see fly-half Tom Viljoen return from the West Country. Along with his playmaking and kicking, he allowed Greg Sullivan to return to his preferred role at centre. Head coach Andy Fields said: "We'll have more strength in depth."

**STEEL WORKS** David Steel, the Lowestoft & Yarmouth president, is spearheading a scheme to make Gunton Park in Corton more

## SHORT PASS

Cottenham Renegades, of Cambridge, lifted the Smallest Rugby Club World Cup, scoring 26 points without reply against Welsh club Magor at Tolworth, the home of Racal Decca. The event was for one-team amateur clubs.

attractive and accessible by raising money for a series of changes. L&Y have also been selling advertising boards to engage the Three North-East club with the community. He said: "We want to get them involved and ensure they feel part of the club."

**FIRE DAMAGE** Locks Heath Pumas were devastated after their minibus was stolen and set on fire while it had equipment inside. But the Hampshire One club was overwhelmed by support for a crowdfunding scheme to raise the £7,000 needed to replace the lost items. Portsmouth also loaned them a minibus.

**IN MOURNING** Eastleigh were saddened by the deaths on successive days of two of the club's most influential figures. Former chairman Malcolm Miles led the side to their first Hampshire Cup final in 1982 and John Poole, their captain from 1966-78, founded the colts section in the late 1970s. 



PHOTO: MARVIN BAKER

## CLUB FOCUS

### HOVE

RELEGATION last spring to Two South-East seems a distant memory for Hove, with the £180,000 resurfacing of their council-owned pitches underway and a boom from RWC 2015. Club safeguarding officer Neil Parker said: "We have more than 400 junior players in 30 teams and expect that number to increase after the global tournament. Our club is also the social hub of the area."

Hove, who have launched a Return to Rugby programme to cater for new and lapsed players, run three senior sides, a women's XV, two colts teams and an U17 side. Ex-England players Alex King and Jordan Turner-Hall are among their youth products, while Geraldine Brown is the only female chairperson in the county.

New captain Sam Whiting plays at full-back or fly-half while Alex Robertson coaches the first team, Sim Ward looks after the second XV (the Beefeaters), and former No 9 Nick Garrish is manager and head coach of the thirds, the Fusiliers.

Hove's next tantalising target is to return to having two or three social XVs.

▲ **Central figure**  
Martin MacDonald  
tests Sutton & Epsom



## FOCUS ON CLUB RUGBY

# SOUTH-WEST

A round-up of news from the South-West region. Edited by Michael Austin

**FERRY ROUTE** It's all change for **Oxford Harlequins**, of One East, who've ended a nine-year ground-sharing arrangement with Oxford RFC and are back at their former Marston Ferry Road headquarters. They've invested £10,000 in upgrading the pitch and the site's old barn has been revamped as the new clubhouse. It was many happy returns, too, because they beat Salisbury 24-19 and Witney 27-26 in their opening home games.

Keni Fisilau, the former Tonga centre, is continuing as head coach, Allan Purchase is captain and signings include fly-half Sam Watkinson, wing Axel Poulet and back-rows Gus Milton, Robin Craig and Richard Batson.

**FIJIAN INFUX** The fortunes of **Devonport High School Old Boys** could change this season. After battling to avoid bottom place in Devon Two recently, they have reached an agreement with the Plymouth Fiji club that will see an influx of players being registered by them. Mike Freeman, the Devonport DoR, introduced some of the Fijians in a friendly against Camelford and they helped to turn a 26-0 half-time deficit into a 26-26 draw.

**WONDER WALL** Southern Counties North club **Wallingford** have completed the refurbishment of their Hithercroft Road HQ. Sport England aid and a £46,000 RFU grant have allowed them to revamp their second changing room while work has begun on a modern drainage system under their second pitch. Spokesman Des LeRoy said: "There's a lot going on and a good feel around the club."

**TAKING THE MIKE** Mike Beckly's tenure as **Reading Abbey's** captain this season was off to a flying start when his newly-promoted side won their first three Southern Counties North games, including two at Buckingham and Marlow. Ex-Bude No 8 Beckly wrapped up both the Players' Player and Supporters' Player of the Season awards last spring after his first campaign with Abbey, having been a key member of the squad that won all 18 Berks, Bucks & Oxon Premier games.

Head coach Fungai Mutepefa said: "Mike's a highly intelligent and very affable young man who's risen to prominence through his ability to want to get involved and help out."

**FIELDS OF DREAMS** A buzz of expectation is also going around Manor Fields, the home of **Bletchley**, whose reorganisation features the appointment of Paul Evans as head of senior rugby, a reformed seniors committee and a new head coach in Brendan Clark.

An extension and refurbishment scheme is providing members and newcomers with some of the best community facilities around North Oxfordshire. They have four pitches, six changing-room suites and a large clubhouse. High on Bletchley's agenda is the search for a successor to mini-junior chairman Adrian Williams, who is standing down next spring.

Meanwhile, U15 lock Joe Schembre won a competition to be the Fiji flag-bearer for their RWC game against Uruguay in Milton Keynes.



### CLUB FOCUS

## READING

Having illuminated many a pitch around the world during his sparkling playing career, it was appropriate that former Bath, England and Lions centre Jeremy Guscott paid Reading a visit to switch on the One West club's new floodlights.

Funded by private donations from members and a £30,000 grant from the RFU's Lead Up & Legacy scheme, the new lights are housed on six 15m-high columns around the club's second pitch. Three of them also contain additional Philips OptiVision lights for the training area on Reading's third pitch.

Club chairman Andy Clark, who has known Guscott for more than 30 years, invited him to perform the ceremony. Clark recalled: "We went to the same school in Bath, although I was a lot older than him. It was a great honour to have a player of his calibre come along and Jeremy cares about grass-roots rugby very much."

Reading's league team, guided by head coach Paul Gaster, again have prop Mark Roberts as captain in the quest to improve on last season's ninth-place finish.

▲ **Famous face**  
Jeremy Guscott with  
Andy Clark at Reading

**SPECIAL GUEST** Bath prop Kane Palma-Newport, who learnt the game with **Avondale** colts, opened their refurbished clubhouse. President Maurice 'Moz' Hall paid tribute to chairman and project manager Martin Bath and club captain Shawn Russell, who did the carpentry work at the club.

**Hornets** celebrated the official opening of their new stand with a 42-34 win over Dings Crusaders in National Three South-West.

**CHARITY WORK** **Castle Cary**, of Somerset One, have raised more than £25,000 over the past five years for Macmillan Cancer Support, with the annual 'K7s' event a key source of funding. The sevens tournament was launched in memory of Kay Booker, a club member who died from cancer aged 39.

**Ross-on-Wye**, of Gloucester Two, raised £3,000-plus from a charity event, 'Smile Fest',

organised in memory of former player Ollie Floyd, 20, who died last March in an accident.

**ANDI HANDY** Andi Kyriacou, the former Sale, Cardiff Blues and Ulster hooker, has become **Chippenhams's** head coach. He had impressed the Three South-West club's DoR John Brown while helping out last season.

The club welcomed RFU president Jason Leonard to Allington Field to look at the restyled facilities, a grant from the governing body covering £10,000 of the £25,000 cost.

**GRINDLE MISSED** **Cornwall** were mourning president John Grindle only a few months after he helped to present the Bill Beaumont Cup to the team at Twickenham after the 18-13 win over Lancashire. County chairman Denis Preece said: "His presence, knowledge and leadership will be missed."



## SHORT PASS

Veor, under coach Lee Caddy, aim to celebrate their 50th anniversary by winning promotion from Cornwall One. Last season they lifted the Cornwall Clubs Cup by beating Lanner but lost in a promotion play-off to Devon One runners-up Plymstock Albion Oaks, who went up to Cornwall-Devon.





## FOCUS ON CLUB RUGBY

# NORTH

A round-up of news from the North region. Edited by Michael Austin

**ROCKING REFURB** **Whitley Bay Rockcliff**, of Durham-Northumberland Two, have completed their clubhouse refurbishment. Northumberland president Ken Fraser, who performed the opening ceremony, said: "Rockcliff have been determined to put themselves at the heart of the community. This development, along with the continued growth of teams involving players of all ages, testifies that these plans are working."

Seven organisations contributed to transforming their playing and community facilities, including Biffa Awards, the RFU, the Northumberland union and Sport England, alongside the club's own resources.

**ZULU WARRIORS** A partnership between **Upper Eden**, based around the rural areas of Kirkby Stephen and the Eden Valley, and disadvantaged communities in South Africa is still thriving 13 years since the project was launched. The programme enables talented

black players, aged from 18 to 30, to coach rugby in local schools and at Upper Eden, and share their Zulu culture with the community.

The exchange arrangement that involves Upper Eden players and coaches going to South Africa also links to Newcastle Falcons' community programme. This autumn Njabulo Zulu, ex-Sharks and Golden Lions U21, and Trompie Nontshinga, a Super 15 and South Africa sevens player, have made the trip along with Lindokuhle Mbatha. Zulu and Nontshinga are now primarily coaches but all three are playing for Upper Eden this season.

**MOOR YOUTH** **Heaton Moor**, of the new Cheshire (South) league, were thrilled to win the coveted Youth and Mini Section of the Year prize at the National Rugby Awards. The U13 side reached the Lancashire Cup final and the U11 team were unbeaten last season.

Judges, who included ex-England players Jeremy Guscott and Jeff Probyn, were also

## SHORT PASS

Australian back-row Eamon Chapman, Scarborough's Player of the Year in his Yorkshire One debut season last term, signed for National Three London club Guernsey Raiders only a month into the new campaign.

impressed with the work in schools of club development officer Paul Bailey, while playing numbers have doubled to 300-plus in three seasons. Mini-junior chairman Phil Yeomans said: "It shows Heaton Moor is a fantastic place to play rugby and we hope this award encourages even more children to join us."

**GOLD GROWTH** **Old Rishworthians** also won plaudits for extending their clubhouse on the back of a thriving junior section. They received the RFU's Gold Standard Legacy award from rugby development director Steve Grainger at their clubhouse in Halifax. He said: "We chose only 15 clubs throughout the country that had gone the extra mile."

Club treasurer Tim Thornton added: "The project started life as an idea for providing additional space for the junior set-up. It's part of a long-term plan for more improvements."

Rishworthians, who play in Yorkshire Two, were founded in 1930 and next year will celebrate 50 years at their headquarters.

**CURRIE FAVOUR** Luke Currie, 28, a prop for **Skipton** in Yorkshire Four, was selected for his Infantry debut in the British Army Corps Championship. A Kingsman with the 2nd Battalion Duke of Lancashire's Regiment, he was chosen after impressing in trials at Aldershot. He said: "It's a great honour as some of the players in the trials had played at National League and Championship level."


**NEW CHALLENGE** **Ellesmere Port**, known as 'the Oilers', won South Lincs-Cheshire Three last season but restructuring means they are lining up in the new Merseyside (West) league with some sides they met a year ago. President Gordon Fenton said: "We'd like to think we'll be competing at the top but there are some new clubs in there that we expect will push us a bit harder."

A try-fest produced a 104-3 victory for **Southport** over Newton-le-Willows in the Merseyside league. Even a fifth straight win didn't lift them to the top of the table, Ruskin Park outstaging them on points difference.

**LUKE SHARP** **Keighley** not only achieved their highest score in the 29-year history of leagues but also their biggest victory when beating Barnsley 72-7 in Yorkshire Two. Wing Luke Carter scored four of his side's 11 tries.

**Wetherby** notched 33 straight wins when beating Old Otliensians 34-17 in Yorkshire Three. Last season was their best in the club's history, as they won all 22 matches and lifted the Yorkshire Four title.

**HARTLEPOOL HISTORY** A collection of memorabilia, described by Chris McLoughlin, the **Hartlepool & District** union secretary, as "unique", has been on display at the town's Central Library to dovetail with the RWC. He said: "It gives a marvellous insight into the development of the game in Hartlepool."

The exhibition spans the 1870s to the 1930s and early printed material includes posters, match programmes and tickets. 



PIC: MICHAEL AUSTIN

## CLUB FOCUS

# OSSETT

The Drury family takes some beating when it comes to their input at Ossett, a Yorkshire Four club. Fly-half Jack captains the senior side, his dad Sam plays in the front row for the first and second teams, having appeared in more than 700 games, and mum Angela, a committee member, organises social events.

Secretary Kevin Davey said: "Ossett is a true community club and the only one to have played in the final of all three Yorkshire knockout competitions – the Cup, Shield and Silver Trophy. We take great pride in our history and values, and we've a cross-section of players ranging from students to business owners."

"By December we'll have completed work on a floodlit grass training pitch, funded 50-50 by ourselves and the RFU. It will enable us to focus on core skills and hopefully help to recruit new players. We are targeting a top-four finish."

Key figures in that aim are player-coach Mark Stuart, a former West Leeds front-row forward, and vice-captain and hooker/back-rower Rob Young.

 **Standing firm**  
No 8 Dale Burnley (white sleeves) resists Skipton's advances

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CANTERBURY



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CANTERBURY



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QR: 101303

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MUNSTER 15/16 COTTON TEE  
QR: 101202

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ADIDAS



MUNSTER 15/16 TRAINING JERSEY  
QR: 101216

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GLOUCESTER 15/16 TRAVEL TEE  
QR: 100955

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**What is the name of the captain of the England rugby team?**

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- 2) chris robshaw
- 3) patrick smith
- 4) Julian keberen

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# HOW TO DEAL WITH CARBS

**T**HERE ARE all sorts of myths about why carbohydrate loading is fine before a big event or why you should be eating like cavemen.

The thing that should be preached regularly, though, is why balance is a necessity in your daily diet.

In fact, common sense can be applied to this. So, if we say that 40-50% of your diet should comprise of carbs, assuming you live an active lifestyle,



that doesn't mean there are set rules. Have you got a taxing session coming up but your energy is low? Then you'll need a quick carbohydrate boost.

That's where your bananas come in, being easy to digest with an average of 31g of carbs per banana. Then there are sweet potatoes, fit to bursting with simple starches and carbenoids to help with cell repair.

You'd be well served looking for nutrient-dense greens like spinach (left), and how about brown rice, which is high in fibre and gives

## DO


► If you want foods to slowly release energy, look for carbs with a low GI  
► Quick fix? Bananas are fast-acting but hummus also has complex carbs and is high in fibre

## DON'T

► High-sugar snacks are best avoided, though the odd treat does no harm

you long-lasting energy – you should definitely consider all of these in your carb intake as part of a well-balanced, everyday diet.

Not everything natural is good, though. Fruit juices, for example, are a culprit, with a high sugar content. We shouldn't even have to tell you that high-sugar carbs like pastries and doughnuts are a no-no!

Sometimes, though, you should allow yourself tiny pleasures... in moderation. Like this banana bread recipe, below. You get all the benefits of the bananas and heart-healthy nuts, and it tastes pretty good too! 

## SWEET POTATOES ARE FULL OF SIMPLE STARCHES

### NUTTY

### BANANA BREAD

SERVES TEN

- 75g of butter
- 100g of light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 3 ripe bananas
- 200g of wholemeal flour
- 2 heaped teaspoons of baking powder
- 100g of mixed walnuts and hazelnuts

- 1 Set oven to gas mark 4 or 180°C. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time.
- 2 Peel and mash the bananas. Beat mash into the creamed mixture, then sift in flour (adding the bran that's left in the sieve, too) with the baking powder. Fold in, then stir in the mixed nuts.
- 3 Spoon the mixture into a loaf tin and smooth the top.
- 4 Bake for 40-50 minutes until loaf is risen and golden, and a skewer inserted into centre comes out clean. Rest for 10 minutes then turn out and cool on a wire rack.

► Recipe from...  
Woman's Weekly





# HOW TO BE A BALL-PLAYING LOCK

Fiji's Leone Nakarawa gives tips on beating defenders, breaking the gain-line and, of course, offloading

**Magic hands**  
Nakarawa offloads  
against England

In each of the past two seasons Leone Nakarawa has offloaded more than 60 times in the Pro12 – nearly twice as much as anyone else in the league – and at RWC 2015 he topped the offloads stats in the pool stage with 11.

INTERVIEW: SARAH WICKFORD. PICS: ACTION IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES, HOW EVANS AGENCY & INPHO





## 1 ALL-ROUND GAME

Nakarawa recognises the importance of a lock's key roles – the set-piece and defence (he won nine turnovers in the World Cup) – but admits: "I like running with the ball; it's the Fiji player in me. I used to play a lot of sevens and I enjoy an open style of rugby."



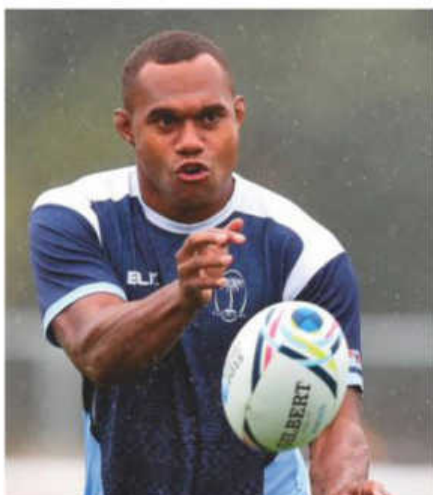
## 2 STEP IT UP

Beating defenders with footwork is not just a skill for backs to deploy. Nakarawa says: "Rather than run straight at defenders, I always use my feet so I can confuse them. The defender will be in a good position, ready to tackle you, so I try to step him."



## 3 SHOULDER WORK

When it comes to getting over the gain-line, he targets defenders' weak shoulders – info he has from video analysis. "Players tackle with their right or left shoulder but they have a weaker side, so I try to beat the defender on their weaker shoulder."



## 4 START YOUNG

Nakarawa puts his ability to offload down to his childhood in Fiji, saying: "We used to play in rivers with water up to our chests or necks, so we had to get our arms up to pass. Also, if you can do things in wet weather in Fiji, it's a lot easier on good, dry pitches."



## 5 PUSH AND SHOUT

"Firstly you have to beat the defender – I'll try to push him – then free your arms to offload," he explains. "My team-mates will shout 'left' and 'right', so I know where they are. Sometimes even before the game, they say, 'Remember, I'll be on your left or right.'"



## 6 GO WITH YOUR INSTINCT

"As soon as you feel like you want to do something, do it," Nakarawa says. "Don't think about the negative side of it, just do it, otherwise it will be too late. If you keep doing it, your body gets used to what your mind wants to do. It will become more natural."

# WHAT YOU COULD DO



### LEONE NAKARAWA GLASGOW & FIJI

● Try to practise a lot because practice makes perfect. We do two offloading drills at Glasgow to help us improve.

● The first involves running at two players with pads. You have to run through the middle of the two pads and free your hands to offload. They'll hit you hard when you run through and use the pads to make it difficult for

you, but you have to try to free your arms to pass.

● The second is offload touch. This is like a normal game of touch but as soon as you've been touched, you've got to pass the ball to a team-mate. It's about developing the skill to offload quickly, making it more of an instinct.





# HOW TO CARRY IN TIGHT SPOTS LIKE SEAN O'BRIEN

## THE EXERCISES 3 STEPS TO SUCCESS

Follow these simple moves and you could be smashing through close contact like the Tullow Tank...

### PAUSE SQUAT ▼ 3 x 5 REPS

Perform a normal squat, but hold at the bottom for three seconds.



### RENEGADE ROW ▼ 4 x 8 REPS EACH ARM

Like a press-up but with dumb-bells in each hand, pull one up to your chest and back. Keep a rigid core.



### DEFICIT DEADLIFT ▼ 4 x 6 REPS

Squatting on a box, grasp the bar. Drive up through the heels until standing. Reverse the movement to return to the start.



**I**N HEAVY traffic, with momentum stalling, you need a big ball-carrier to get things moving again.

That's where powerful players like Sean O'Brien come in – the players who are adept at getting low, pumping their legs and steaming forward as defenders struggle to ground them. You could be that

dynamic momentum creator for your side, but to do so you need to be well balanced, with a strong core. You need to be able to generate leg power under great fatigue and with a heavy load. You need pace under duress.

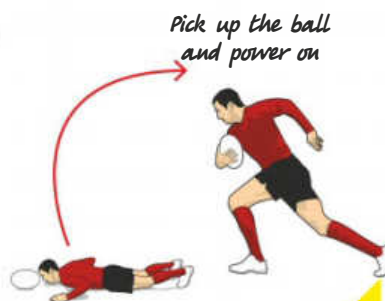
So to the left, Mat Grove, from Performance Pro gym in London, outlines exercises to help propel punchy carries forward and below is a challenge to work on over time.

**Power point**  
Sean O'Brien gets low and drives on

## THE RUGBY WORLD FITNESS CHALLENGE

**Lying start sprint** Time to channel your inner Usain Bolt. With a ball in front of you ready to be picked up and a cone 40m away, lie face down. On starter's orders, press up quickly, pick up the ball and get into a split stance. Sprint to the cone, staying low and driving legs like pistons.

Forget whether you're a **beginner** or at the **elite level**. Can you improve your sprint time after a month of doing the exercises on the left?



### HOW FAST ARE YOU?

Tell us! Contact us on Twitter @Rugbyworldmag or via Facebook – Rugby World Magazine

## WATCH MORE



To watch a video of the exercises on the left being performed, go to [po.st/SOBfit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=po.st/SOBfit). And for more advice on drills, fitness and coaching, see [rugbyworld.com/takingpart](https://www.rugbyworld.com/takingpart)

CUT OUT. TAKE TO TRAINING. TAKE TO THE PARK. KEEP.

# Nick Kennedy's MIDDLE PEEL

Nick Kennedy scored a try off this lineout move on his England debut at Twickenham, dinking the ball down to Danny Care and then taking his return pass...

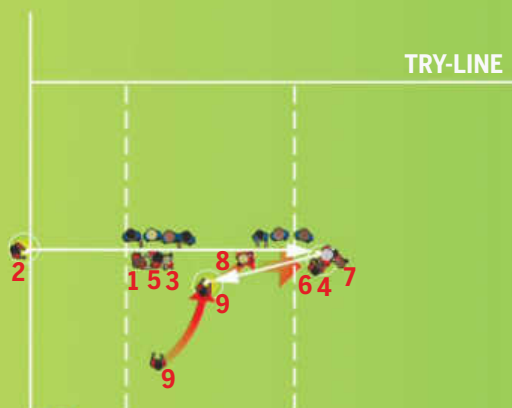
**What's the object?** To score a try by creating a hole in the middle of an attacking lineout.

**How it works?** A rear pod backtracks beyond the 15m line where 6 and 7 lift 4. He hits 9 off the top, putting him through the gap between the two pods. As soon as 4 lands, he tracks 9 to create a two-on-one.

**Key points** The front pod must put 5 up in the lineout to interest the defence, while 8 holds the interest of the rear defensive pod.



*Nick Kennedy played for London Irish, Harlequins, Toulon and England. He is now London Irish's academy director*



**A**

STEP A

6 & 7 lift 4, holding him up long enough for him to hit 9 off the top



**B**

STEP B

9 attacks the space and draws in defender to put 4 in for the score

RUGBY WORLD

PRO MOVES. ONLY IN RUGBY WORLD MAGAZINE



CUT OUT. TAKE TO TRAINING. TAKE TO THE PARK. KEEP.



*Ellis says...*

## "Learn to play passing relays"

### What's needed

One ball for each team and two cones per player.

### How to play

Divide players into teams of five or six, and line them up along cones as shown below. The first player at the end of each line starts with the ball.

When the coach blows the whistle, the first player in each team runs to the cone in front of them, passes the ball back to the next player and runs back to their cone.

The receiver continues the movement until the ball reaches the end of the line. If the ball is dropped, the team

must start again. The first team to reach the end wins.

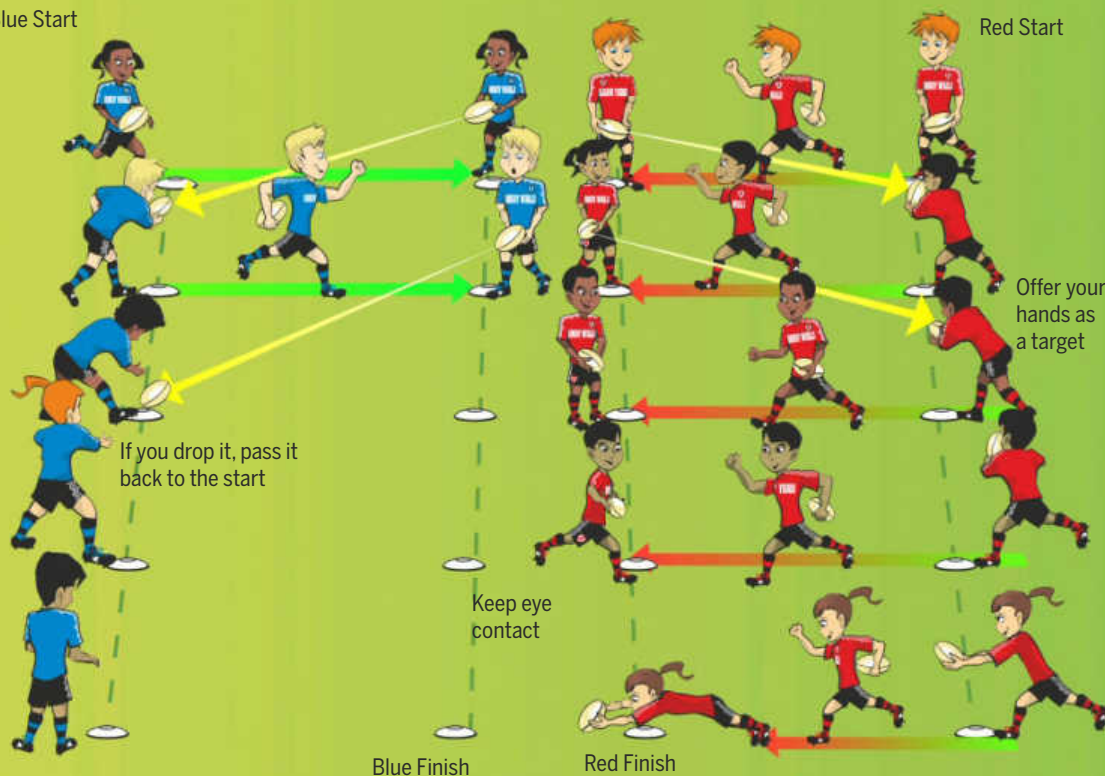
### Tactics

Race in both directions, so that players get to practise passing off both hands.

Passers make eye contact with the receiver, who should offer their hands as a target.

Blue Start

Red Start



# RUGBY WORLD

MINI RUGBY GAMES. ONLY IN RUGBY WORLD MAGAZINE

# THIS MONTH'S SKILL

## JUMP AT A LINEOUT

**E**VEN WHEN senior players are lifted in the lineout, they still have to initiate the leap, so it's good for young minis to learn to jump properly – and get a jump on their opponents.

Too many youngsters stand with their hands above their heads as they

wait for the ball to be thrown in, but the biomechanics are all wrong.

Instead, you should step into the jump, bending your knees, and using your arms to gain extra height as you take off. With this technique, you can jump up, forwards or backwards.

**Next month** Play Kick & Catch.



### WATCH MORE

To watch a video of mini players demonstrating this drill, go to [po.st/LOJump](http://po.st/LOJump). For more skills videos, see [rugbyworld.com/takingpart](http://rugbyworld.com/takingpart)



**1 Grounded** Keep hands low to start with – put them above your head and you'll never get off the ground



**2 Knees bent** The best way to start is with knees slightly bent and one foot forward



**3 Quick step** Step into the jump to gain momentum and use your arms to gain height



**4 Take off** Get it right and you'll be head and shoulders above your opposite man





**Lost talent** Ferris won the last of his 35 Irish caps in 2012, aged 26

WORDS: NATE FIELD. PIC: INPHO

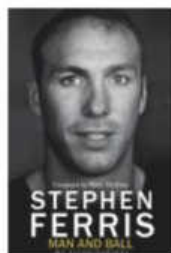
## BOOK OF THE MONTH

# Stephen Ferris: Man and Ball

**T**HE FORMER Ireland flanker takes us on a roller-coaster ride through his career, from the joy of a Grand Slam to the shock of losing two team-mates to sudden and premature deaths.

The ankle injury that ended Ferris's career bookends this autobiography, and his descriptions of the physical pain and mental anguish he endured during his two-year battle for fitness are compelling. "As soon as I know 100% I'm going to retire, I feel an overwhelming sense of relief," he says.

That torment is put into perspective by the death during a game of Ireland U19 team-mate John McCall, which



changed Ferris's attitude to rugby, and by the passing of Ulster's Nevin Spence in a farming accident. Both tragedies are dealt with movingly.

There are lots of lighter moments, as Ferris recounts childhood scrapes, and high jinks from the 2009 Lions tour and RWC 2011. He also dwells on people who have angered him, among them Matt Williams, Wayne Barnes, Dylan Hartley and Dimitri Szarzewski.

Written in a colloquial style that reassures you this is Ferris's story in his own words, this is a cracking read.

### 6 TO GIVE AWAY

For a chance to win a copy of this book, go to [rugbyworld.com/competitions](http://rugbyworld.com/competitions) and enter the relevant competition.

**RW Rating** ★★★★★  
Transworld Ireland, £20

### ▼ Ben Cohen: Carry Me Home



He's best known as a RWC 2003 winner, but only 20 pages of Ben Cohen's book are devoted to that, as much of it is about the impact of his father's death following a violent assault. "The desire that possessed me to do him proud was almost supernatural," he says.

**RW Rating** ★★★★★  
Ebury Press, £20

### ▼ 400 at 5.30 with Nannies



Ex-Rugby World editor Peter Bills gives an insight into "the lost world of sports journalism" with 300 pages of entertaining tales from his long career. The book also has a serious side, discussing Bills's view that rugby and newspapers have both changed for the worse.

**RW Rating** ★★★★★  
Pitch Publishing, £12.99

### ▼ Mini and Youth Rugby



This guide for coaches and parents is packed with excellent advice. It explains the game's ethics, deals with accusations that rugby is unsafe, and presents a new perspective even for long-time rugby fans. There are 70 pages of handy drills.

**RW Rating** ★★★★★  
Bloomsbury, £16.99

## RUNNING SHOES

▼ **A. UA Speedform Fortis** Designed for high mileage. £100, [underarmour.co.uk](http://underarmour.co.uk)

▼ **B. Asics Gel-Nimbus 17 Lite-Show** It has three layers of cushioning to help you power on. £145, [asics.co.uk](http://asics.co.uk)

▼ **C. Adidas Ultra Boost** Sophisticated in grey, its lightweight cushioning gives you a 20% boost. £130, [adidas.co.uk](http://adidas.co.uk)

▼ **D. Salomon S-Lab X-Series** An urban runner in red. £145, [salomon.com/uk](http://salomon.com/uk)

A



B



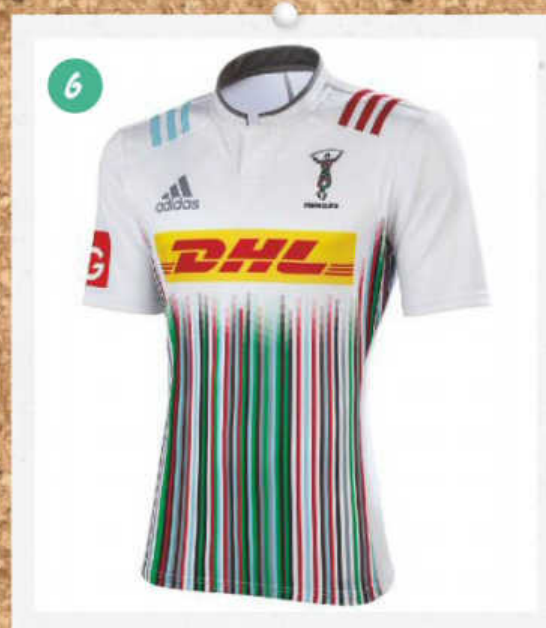
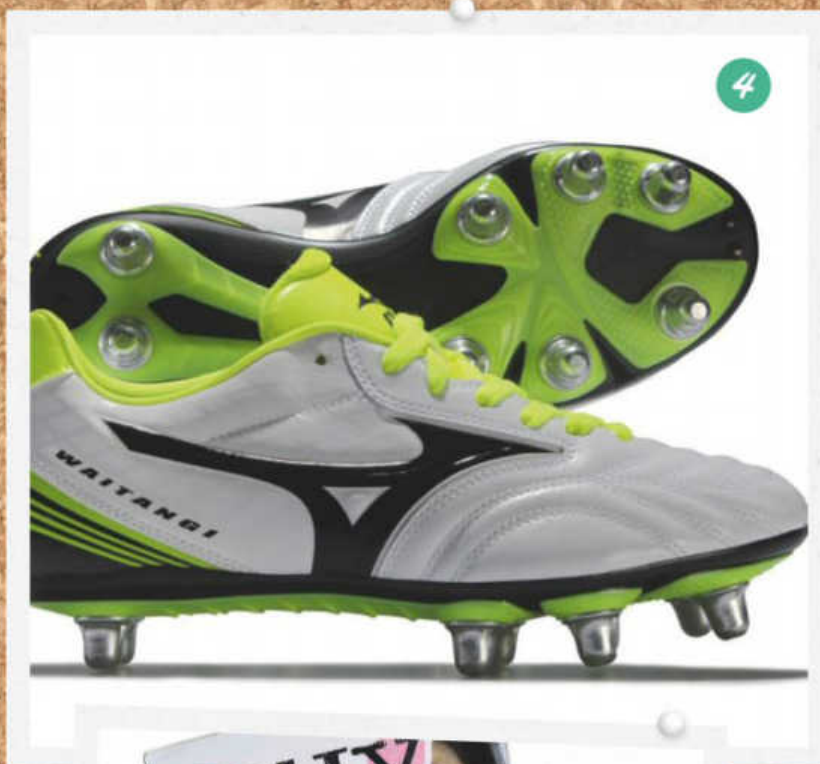
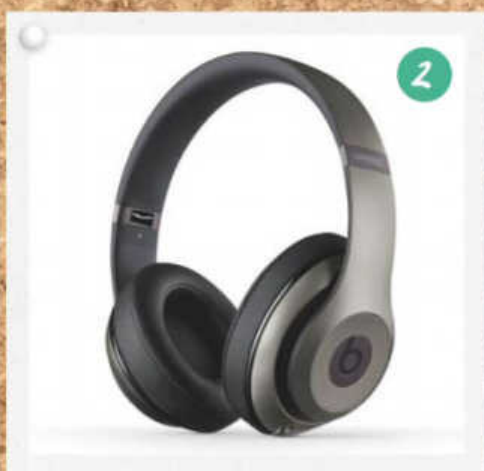
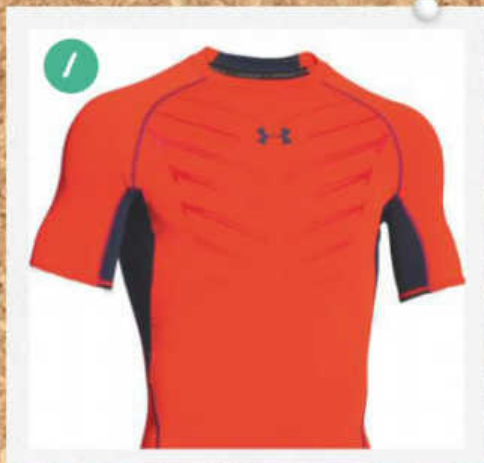
C



D







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# JOHNNY REDELINGHUYLS

**Age** 31 (7 February 1984) **Born** Windhoek **Country** Namibia **Position** Loosehead prop

**H**E'S THE only player to win 50 caps for Namibia and marked the end of his Test career by trying to convert his country's last try in their final RWC 2015 game against Argentina. He missed! Here Johnny Redelinghuys talks about juggling sport and work, how Namibian rugby has changed and what comes next for the construction firm boss...

**I was a chubby kid.** I couldn't run as fast as everyone else, but when I first packed down in a scrum I thought, 'This I can do!' Rugby is the traditional game for Afrikaans-speaking kids in Namibia and I instantly loved it.

**By the time I was 18 I'd represented my country for three years at U18 level.** I started to get invitations from South African universities and the franchise provinces. The Cheetahs, based out of Bloemfontein, offered me a bursary to go there so I went, combining my studies with my rugby.

**I studied mechanical engineering but I failed everything!** I was in the last year of my studies when I got the call to play for Namibia. That was in 2006 and we qualified for the World Cup, so I was travelling back and forth between Bloemfontein and Windhoek. I neglected my studies and didn't finish them in the end.

**The 2007 World Cup was an unbelievable experience.** The massive stadiums and the five-star hotels in France took some getting used to. I remember we stayed at a beach resort just outside Marseille and we spent a lot of time in the ocean. It was fantastic.

**This year we were easily the most professional we've ever been.** Back in 2007 most of us were amateurs, and to keep a bunch of amateur guys from having a party after a game – or even in between games – was quite hard! Certainly by the 2011 World Cup we were a lot more professional and in 2015 even more so again.

**We still had a lot of amateurs in the side this year – and I'm one of them.** My father set up a steel construction company back in 1983, and I inherited it from him a couple of years ago. We specialise in steel structures for industrial warehousing.

**My day job means that a round trip to training is around 170km (105 miles).** On a standard day I'd finish work at 4pm to get to training and get back at around 9.15pm. But there were a few times when we would have both morning and evening training sessions. On those days I'd wake up at 4am, drive to morning training, before getting back in the car and doing a full day's work. Then I'd have to drive back to Windhoek for the evening session, getting home after 9pm.

**I almost missed a Test match due to work.** When we played Zimbabwe in Windhoek this year I had to go and fix a problem on the morning of the game. It was on a farm about 200km (125 miles) away, and I got really lost on the way there. But I fixed it, drove back and arrived just in time for kick-off. It worked out well in the end – I scored two tries and was named Man of the Match!

**People think it's crazy, but I did it all for the love of the game.** I didn't need to do any of this – it doesn't put bread on the table – but it was all for the passion and love of rugby.

**As the boss I was able to take time off from work for the World Cup.**

My wife, mother and wife's uncle work for me and I left them in charge, which meant they couldn't come to watch me play unfortunately. But while I was in England I was checking emails every day, sorting out problems and taking phone calls.



## JOHNNY'S ONE-WORD ANSWERS

Scrum **Dominate**  
World Cup **Experience**  
Namibia **Pride**  
Family **Love**  
Room-mate **Best friend**  
Desert **Beautiful**  
Jacques Burger  
**Inspirational**



◀ **Finding the gap**  
Namibia's Johan  
Deyssel scores v NZ



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**The last stand**  
Redelinghuys is chaired off after his final Test, against Argentina

## “AT THE 2007 WORLD CUP MOST OF US WERE AMATEURS AND TO STOP US HAVING A PARTY AFTER GAMES WAS HARD!”

**I have now officially hung up my boots.** Rugby has taken up a lot of my time, what with driving four hours a day to training. I have neglected my wife and kids. Now I'm looking forward to spending more time with them.

**I feel pride in what we've achieved and sadness**

► **On call** Redelinghuys still dealt with work calls while at RWC 2015



**that it's over.** When we lost by a point to Georgia (17-16 at Exeter) we were so emotional because we wanted to win one game. It was the last chance for so many of us and we knew it.

**Namibian rugby is going from strength to strength.** I hope that all the players are professional by the time of the next World Cup. That first win will come. **RWC**

### DID YOU KNOW?

Namibia stalwarts Redelinghuys, Tinus du Plessis, Jacques Burger and PJ van Lill first played together for the country's U18 side.



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# WHAT GOES ON TOUR

*Goes in Rugby World*

W

E WERE allowed a night out during our training camp in Lanzarote before RWC 2003, writes former Wales prop Adam Jones.

Within seconds of arriving at the pub, Iestyn Thomas was up on the bar, having spirits poured down his throat à la Paul Gascoigne in the 'dentist's chair'. We were like animals released from the zoo and we drank the place dry.

Mark Jones, Sonny Parker and Mefin Davies were the only boys who didn't have a drink. They looked like horrified victims trapped in a nightmare.

Back at the hotel, Melon (Gethin Jenkins) spewed all over the foyer. Steve Hansen angrily ordered us to bed before cleaning it up himself. The head coach of Wales, mopping up Melon's sick.

We all woke up the next day, feeling like death, and assembled guiltily at training. Hansen barked: "Who drank last night?"

## THE HEAD COACH OF WALES MOPPED UP MELON'S SICK

Most of us raised our hands.

"Who didn't?"

Mark, Mefin and Sonny raised theirs.

"You three are doing tackling drills."

The coaches proceeded to put the non-drinkers through a brutal session of tackling. They were shown no mercy, while the rest of us watched, wincing.

Hansen thought it would make us feel guilty, but he failed to understand the Welsh mentality. We just thought, 'Brilliant. We've got away with it.' The non-drinkers didn't see the funny side.

● Extract from *Bomb*, published by Headline, RRP £20.



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# Evans is revved up to take Wales' No 1 spot

The Scarlets loosehead talks progress, props and pigs with RW's Katie Field

**T**HE LAST time the Scarlets reached the knockout stages of the European Cup, in the spring of 2007, Rob Evans was just turning 15 and was showing a bit of promise as a loosehead at Haverfordwest rugby club and Sir Thomas Picton School.

Since then he has made great progress, coming through with the Scarlets' U16, U18 and Academy sides, playing for Wales U18 and U20, making more than 50 first-team appearances for his region and winning three Wales caps this year.

Meanwhile, the Scarlets have bumped along as a mid-table side in the Pro12, making the top four just twice, most recently in 2012-13, when they lost to Ulster in the semi-final.

However, there are signs they might challenge for silverware this season, as their 20-8 win at Zebre in the Guinness Pro12 last month was their seventh consecutive victory in the competition and their fifth in a row away from home. That represents the Scarlets' best Pro12 run.

"It's great at the Scarlets at the moment," says the 23-year-old Evans. "There's a good group of boys and we have a good coaching set-up led by Wayne Pivac. Training is going really well and we have been bringing it into the weekend as well.

"Last year we were a bit frustrated with our away wins. We set a hell of a record at home but were losing all our away ones. That was a big point we wanted to address this season."

They finished sixth in the past two Pro12 seasons, so are the Scarlets aiming higher now? "Yes – the top four, or even beyond that, is the aim," says Evans. "On our day we can beat anyone. We have a smaller squad than some but, injuries permitting, we want to be competing for the league."

This month the Pro12 goes onto the back-burner for a while, and the European Champions Cup comes to the fore. The Scarlets open their pool

campaign with a trip to Northampton on 14 November and host Racing 92 at Parc y Scarlets a week later.

"You always look forward to these big games," says Evans, who took up rugby in his last year of primary school. "You are playing players you don't normally play against and you want to test yourself against the best. You do learn a lot, little things that help you in your game. You also learn about the players in your own team."

Last term was a breakthrough year for Evans. He started all six European games and 12 of 22 Pro12 clashes, having made just four starts and 22 appearances off the bench the season before.

"I was getting quite frustrated, sitting on the bench every week but doing well when I was getting on. Last year Wayne gave me a chance and it went pretty well."

His form led to a Six Nations call-up and Evans won his first cap off the bench against Ireland, then started against Italy. He was part of the World Cup training squad but missed the final cut after another replacement appearance against Ireland in August.

"I was disappointed, but I'd have been more disappointed if I was competing with people who were the same age as me," he says. "Gethin Jenkins and Paul James are both getting a bit older so I'm hoping I'll get more chances after the World Cup."

Evans's parents are teachers but both grew up on farms and he loves the outdoor life too. On his Twitter account he calls himself a "casual pig farmer". What? "I like pigs. My uncle has a beef farm and I had a pen there with a few pigs. I made them into sausages. I will get some more pigs in the next month or two.

"The farm is only ten minutes from my home so I pop in for a cup of tea and feed the pigs and have a bit of a



## QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Name** Matthew Robert Evans

**Nickname** Revs

**Age** 23 (14 April 1992)

**Twitter** @revsprop1

**Personality** A legend!

**Superstitions** I have three

Jelly Babies of the same colour before a game

**TV show** *Home and Away*

**Best holiday** Hvar, Croatia

**Last book read** *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

**Toughest opponent** Carl

Hayman is pretty heavy

**Embarrassing moment**

Getting yellow cards in my first season. I think I got three on the bounce

**Team-mate you'd like to**

be Scott Williams or Aaron Shingler, because they've got loads of money

**Person you'd like to meet**

Floyd Mayweather. I like the way he is, a bit cocky

► **Rob on the run**  
Taking it to Ulster in last year's Euro Cup



cuddle! Well, maybe not a cuddle, but I give them a scratch on the back."

Evans likes to go fishing in the summer, is a Liverpool and Swansea City fan and is considering taking part-ownership of a racehorse called To Be Fair. One outdoor past-time which this Pembrokeshire boy has not embraced is surfing. "I tried it once but I snapped the board," he giggles.

A chat with Evans involves plenty of laughs, but he's serious about wanting to continue his progress so he can be a cornerstone of the Scarlets' front





### BEST RUGBY MOMENT

Beating the Ospreys last winter – we gave them a real hammering. My first Wales cap was good too, with all my family there

### SURPRISING FACT

I passed grade eight at the piano. I don't play now, which my mum says is a shame

### BIZARRE RUGBY MOMENT

Playing Clermont, people said what a beast Jamie Cudmore was, so I flew into him at a ruck. He snapped my finger back, dislocating it. He probably doesn't know he did it. There are no hard feelings

row for years to come – preferably alongside his Wales U20 team-mates Kirby Myhill and Samson Lee – and make the Wales No 1 shirt his own.

With the World Cup gone, his next target is to win more caps in the 2016 Six Nations. "I would be lying if I said I wasn't thinking about the Six Nations, but we have a lot of games with the Scarlets before any of that comes up. My concentration is purely on playing well here and carrying on winning.

"If you play well for your region, everything else comes from that." **EW**



## NEWS ROUND-UP

**STAYING PUT** Scottish flanker John Barclay has signed a new contract to stay at the Scarlets through to 2017.

**STRANGE WAYS** WRU international skills coach Jason Strange is the new Wales U20 head coach, taking over from retired Allan Lewis. Geraint Lewis and Chris Horsman



stay as assistants (forwards and scrum), along with defence coach Richard Hodges.

Rhys Edwards (left) is now Women's Programme Lead, so heads up Wales Women's XVs and sevens coaching teams.

**GO SELECTA** The British & Irish Cup starts this month with the four new Premiership Select sides representing Wales instead of Principality Premiership clubs. The first two rounds of matches take place on 13-15 and 20-22 November.





# Manu finding his feet in Scottish capital

The No 8 tells RW's Katie Field why he's swapped Dunedin for Edinburgh

**H**E ONLY turned 27 in the summer, but with eight years of Super Rugby under his belt, Nasi Manu decided to begin a new chapter in his career, hoping his best is still ahead of him.

The No 8 swapped the Highlanders for Edinburgh and arrived as a Super Rugby champion, having co-captained the Dunedin-based side to the 2015 title. Manu won two age-group world titles with New Zealand (U19 and U20), made his Super Rugby debut for the Crusaders in 2008 before he'd even played a senior club match, and won six ITM Cups with Canterbury. He clearly has plenty to offer Scotland's capital side, but he also believes he has lots to gain from the move.

"Coming to Edinburgh gives me the opportunity to go to Italy, Ireland and Wales in the Pro12 and France in the Challenge Cup," says Manu. "I wanted to come overseas before I got too old – though I feel old at 27! Hopefully the years in front of me will be my best."

"I was ready for a new challenge and gave myself a deadline that after this year's Super Rugby I wanted to travel the world and experience Europe. My partner Alice wanted to travel as well."

Manu ticked Italy off his 'places to go' list in September, when Edinburgh won 27-24 at Treviso. "It was weird – they drive on the wrong side of the road and the language barrier was tough," he laughs. "It was beautiful. It is surreal, thinking of where I am compared to where I was brought up."

Why did Manu choose Edinburgh as his base for exploring Europe? "I was talking with Ben Atiga and he told me what Edinburgh are trying to build and what I could do to this team. It is similar to the Highlanders, with them not being one of the favourites. I felt it was a great environment to be part of."

"We were considering going to France but in the end Scotland was better. We didn't want to cope with the language barrier. This was my first time in Scotland, when we landed



## QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Full Name** Tavake Liukanasi Manu  
**Nickname** Nacho  
**Age** 27 (15 August 1988)  
**Born** Lincoln, New Zealand  
**Twitter** @Nasi\_Manu  
**Personality** Easy-going  
**Superstitions** I put a cross on my arm and write initials that are personal to me  
**Favourite TV show** *Friends*  
**Last book read** *The Bible*  
**Best holiday** Rarotonga, in the Cook Islands  
**Dish to cook** Chop suey  
**Childhood rugby heroes** Daniel Manu (Australia) and Alaska Taufu (Tonga) – my uncles. I watched them play  
**How you switch off** Play my ukulele, bodysurf  
**One person you'd like to meet** (The late) Bob Marley. I like reggae

on 6 August. It was awesome to get here when the Festival was on and it felt like we were on holiday. Now we're finally getting settled in. We're getting to know the boys and Alice is in a WhatsApp group for the partners and they meet for coffee and brunches."

Manu's Mike Tindall-style wonky nose indicates he has been round the block a few times and the experience he gained from helping the Highlanders transform themselves from Super Rugby also-rans to champions should be invaluable to Edinburgh. "I'd been with the Highlanders since 2011 and a core of players from that season stayed around. Every year we thought we could do it (win the title) but we didn't quite gel."

"This year we grew as a team and we bought into the whole culture, not just the rugby. We had a motto, Brotherhood 1-39, meaning everyone in the squad was valued the same. We played for the team, not ourselves."

"Being co-captain definitely made me grow as a person and I feel so lucky to have been part of that campaign. It made it such a special way for me to leave."

Manu made a great first impression on Edinburgh fans as he was Man of the Match on his Guinness Pro12 debut, a 16-9 win over Leinster. He says of games in the North: "People scrum to get a penalty and maul to score a try, whereas in New Zealand it's really unstructured. Because it's a bit slower, the

contacts are harder and it's physical. You're running into a brick wall."

This month Edinburgh will switch their attention to the Challenge Cup. They went all the way to last season's final before losing to Gloucester and Manu is keen to help them go one better. He's been impressed with the squad, even when shorn of Scotland players during the World Cup.



"There is a lot of talent coming through and I really rate the forward pack. I have never played behind a tight five that are dominant in the scrum; I have always been behind a pack that goes backwards."

"I'm in the second locker room because all the spots in the main one are taken, so I'm with all the young boys and they are all under 22. Some are straight out of high school. I feel really old in there! But their energy and enthusiasm to learn is awesome and their skill levels are quite good."

► **Leading figure**  
 Nasi Manu in Pro12 action for Edinburgh



### TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Sam Warburton, who I faced in age-group rugby and have remembered since then. I couldn't believe how good he was

### FAVOURITE RUGBY FUNNY

A group of players went out for dinner. They asked how I'd like my steak cooked and I said "medium please", then they asked Otulea Katoa and he said "large"!

### SURPRISING FACT

One of my cousins is Swiss (Pepa Manu), who's a really famous singer in New Zealand

Manu doesn't know a lot about most of Edinburgh's opponents, so he goes into matches not knowing if his team are favourites or underdogs. But he says: "My mindset is to prepare as good as I can as I don't know what to expect. Players can get caught out by not preparing well because they are taking the opposition lightly."

"It will take hard work but I think we can make the top four. It's the same mindset as the Highlanders: do everything you can in the week to perform your best at the weekend." RM



## NEWS ROUND-UP

**WINNING BOOK** Glasgow fans can relive last season's Guinness Pro12 title triumph (right) with the team's souvenir champions book. The 100-page book costs £19.26, including P&P. See [glasgowwarriors.org](http://glasgowwarriors.org)

**TIGHT AT THE TOP** Ayr will have their BT Premiership title credentials tested when



they play Melrose on 21 November. Ayr led the table after eight rounds with six wins and 32 points, but Melrose were six points behind in third with five wins. Heriot's and Hawick also won five of their first eight.

**NEW CHAMPS** The East/South women's select XV won the new Donna Kennedy Cup, beating the West/North 36-10 at BT Murrayfield. Edinburgh U20 beat Glasgow and the West 48-14 to lift the inaugural BT Sport Scottish Rugby Academy Cup.





# Fox-Matamua hunts trophies at Connacht

The Kiwi flanker has started life in Ireland with a bang, says RW's Katie Field

**B** ALL-WINNING back-rows were a hot topic during the World Cup, as David Pocock and Michael Hooper did sterling work for Australia and England rued their lack of a snaffler.

Now Connacht have their very own master of the breakdown, imported from the land of Richie McCaw. Nepia Fox-Matamua arrived in Galway from Auckland during the summer and was instrumental in Connacht making a good start to the season.

Let's discuss the unusual name first up. His parents joined their surnames, while his Christian name gives away a connection to one of New Zealand's rugby heroes. His great-grandfather was George Nepia, the teenage full-back who played every game of the Invincibles tour of Britain, France and Canada in 1924-25 and scored 77 points. It's a heritage to be proud of, but Fox-Matamua doubts it made a difference to his rugby involvement.

"You are pretty strange in New Zealand if you don't come up in a rugby culture, so I don't think my upbringing was any different from any other kid," he says. He was told family stories about George, but adds: "I didn't really appreciate how famous he was until my mid-teens."

His dad Charles was a decent rugby league player, but when Nepia took up union at the Otahuhu club aged nine, Charles managed the team. He also played at his high school, St Peter's, and was picked for Auckland U14, U15, U16 and Schools, as well as playing a bit of Gaelic Football. "One of my friends is Irish and he asked me to go along to his club. I played for a few years, then rugby got too serious."

He cut his rugby teeth in the backs, was moved to No 8 "because I got too physical" and ended up at openside when he stopped growing at 5ft 9in – not that his height bothers him. "It doesn't matter to me, especially being a seven. The way I try to play it makes it easier to be nearer the ground!"



## QUICK-FIRE PROFILE

**Name** Nepia Fox-Matamua  
**Nickname** Nepe or Foxy  
**Age** 24 (5 September 1991)  
**Born** Auckland  
**Personality** Easy-going  
**TV show** *Peaky Blinders*  
**Last book read** I read Ali Williams's book, *Ali's Book of Tall Tales*. It's funny  
**Favourite holiday** Just got back from La Spezia in Italy and the Cinque Terre fishing villages, and it was beautiful  
**Dish you most like to cook** A simple steak and salad  
**Rugby hero** Zinzan Brooke  
**How you switch off** Hang out at the beach at home. Here I find places to explore  
**Embarrassing moment** I'm usually behind the jokes rather than having them played on me. John Cooney is pretty easy pickings!  
**Person you'd like to meet** Michael Jackson would have been fun to meet

It wasn't until he had left school and was excelling in club side University that he thought he might make rugby a career. An injury meant he missed out on the chance to pitch for a New Zealand U20 spot, but he was called into Auckland's senior squad in 2012.

His opportunities were limited by the quality of players ahead of him and in 2013 he switched to North Harbour, only to have his season ruined by injury. Back at Auckland for the 2014 ITM Cup, Fox-Matamua was completing an electrical apprenticeship, then, earlier this year, Connacht head coach Pat Lam phoned him. Lam remembered this talented young openside in Auckland's academy from his time at the Blues. Their paths had also crossed because Lam's son was at St Peter's School with Fox-Matamua.

"At first I didn't believe it was him on the phone, but we got talking and he told me about the opportunity to come and play," says the 24-year-old. "I didn't know too much about Connacht but once Pat mentioned where they have come from and their vision of where they want to be moving forward, it seemed like a good time to come over."

"Pat said Connacht are not the top team in the competition but are trying to move up to cement a spot as one of the top teams. I was excited as it was a new challenge and a chance to see the world. New Zealand is so far from everywhere. Here, Europe is on your doorstep."

His girlfriend Kate McKenzie was up for the move too, so the duo flew to Ireland at the start of July and have set up home in Galway. While Kate found a job as a nanny, Fox-Matamua made a good first impression on the Connacht fans, scoring in his opening three Guinness Pro12 games and being named Man of the Match in the 36-31 win over Cardiff Blues.

► **Strong position**  
 Fox-Matamua holds off a Cardiff Blues hit



Fox-Matamua is quick to credit his Connacht team-mates for his flying start. "We have such a good forward pack. Those tries are not really of my own making – they have been pack tries. It is nice finishing them off."

Connacht's aim in the Pro12 this season is to finish in the top four for the first time. Last spring's seventh place was the province's highest-ever finish, but Fox-Matamua says: "It's too easy just to aim for the top six."

This month brings something rather different, as Connacht will travel to



### **TOUGHEST OPPONENT**

Francis Saili, who is with Munster now. We went to school together and he's a strong ball-carrier

### **RUGBY FUNNY**


We played a trick at school with the locks in the lineout. We'd tell them to jump and then pull their pants down. A funny gag

### **BEST RUGBY MOMENT**

Last year I won the Gallaher Shield with my club, University, in Auckland. That's a big deal at home

Krasnoyarsk in Siberia on 14 November to play Enisei-STM in their first European Challenge Cup pool match. A week later they entertain Brive, and they'll take on Newcastle in a double header in December.

"The big trip over to Russia will be interesting!" he laughs. "I am looking forward to Europe hugely – seeing new parts of the world I wouldn't have the opportunity to see otherwise."

This young Kiwi is certainly doing that – and helping Connacht on their own journey along the way. 



## **NEWS ROUND-UP**

**TWO MORE YEARS** Ireland wing Craig Gilroy (right), 24, has signed a two-year contract extension with Ulster.

**ENGLISH TESTS** The British & Irish Cup kicks off this month, Munster A visiting London Scottish on 13 Nov and Leinster A going to Rotherham the next day. Ulster A



face Bristol first up and Connacht Eagles play the Dragons Premiership Select XV.

**AUSSIE OFF** Former Queensland Reds prop Anthony Mathison has left his role as Young Munster head coach due to personal reasons, DoR John Staunton taking over.

**TICKET DRAW** Everyone who completes a World Rugby survey at [surveymonkey.com/r/WY2F65P](http://surveymonkey.com/r/WY2F65P) will go into a draw to win tickets to Ireland v Italy next spring.





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